

Statement by Mr. Muhammad Humayun Farshori, Secretary Planning & Development Division, Government of Pakistan at the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the 43rd session of the Commission for Social Development February 11, 2005

Mr. Chairperson,

Allow me to extend, on behalf of Pakistan delegation, our warmest felicitations on your assumption of the Chairmanship of the Commission for Social Development. We look forward to work constructively under your stewardship. My delegation would like to associate with the statement made by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of G77 & China.

Mr. Chairman,

2. Ten years ago, world leaders came together in Copenhagen for the first World Summit for Social Development, a meeting that raised hopes and expectations and made actual commitments for the improvement of the human conditions. Today, while commemorating the tenth anniversary of this summit and taking stock of its achievement, we see that these hopes and expectations, though not completely dashed, yet, are certainly diminished. A number of macro economic trends are negatively affecting social development particularly, socio economic deprivation and inequality among individuals, social groups, entire communities and countries across the globe.

3. In reviewing the further implementation of the World Summit for Social Development, we are confronted with the challenges of poverty alleviation, employment generation and social integration. We all are cognizant that poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere. Poverty is the core of all ills. Poverty causes illiteracy, it breeds disease, malnutrition, weak growth and sufferings. It is the reason for moral degradation and human trafficking, it leads to drug proliferation; causes grievous environmental degradation and most of all it provides the gun fodder for terrorism and extremism. Thus any concerted effort to address poverty will have multiple positive effects and collateral benefits. Combating poverty is thus a moral, social, economic and political imperative for all Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The report of the Secretary General on “ Review of further implementation of the World Summit for Social Development and the outcome of the twenty- fourth special session of the General Assembly” has rightly pointed out to reaffirm the need for a people centered approach to development and for its urgent and concrete implementation through coordinated efforts by the international community. Strengthening the prospects of an enabling environment for people-centered development, we need to focus particularly on intensifying integrated strategies and

policies for poverty eradication, creating employment opportunities for all and fostering social integration and cohesion amongst all the segments of society.

5. My delegation believes that although national effort to alleviate poverty is absolutely imperative, the external environment in which the nation states operate also has to be benign and favourable. We all know that trade and not aid is a potent way to promote growth and benefit from globalization. Significant gains have been recorded by many countries but for many others, the benefits of globalization are not being realized. The fact of the matter is that the existing trading rules are clearly biased against the developing countries as the rich countries provide huge subsidies of almost \$ 1 billion a day to the tiny proportion of their population who are in the farming sector. This distortion has edged out the developing countries from global markets although they enjoy comparative advantage in agriculture commodities.

6. My delegation is of the view that we need not have a level playing field but a field tilted in favour of the developing countries. In addition to trade, the developed countries have to open barriers to markets, remove restrictions against migration of labour, give incentives for locating direct investment, promote transfer of technology and higher education in science and technology in developing countries.

7. We agree with the conclusion of the Secretary General's report that the people-centered approach to policy making has not lost its relevance and appeal, but is neglected in many quarters and is also threatened by recent developments on the international scene. We, therefore, endorse that the Commission for Social Development should recommend to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council that implementation of the people centered-approach ought to dominate and shape the agendas of national Governments and International organizations in order to restore the spirit of the Copenhagen Summit and to foster the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. We hope that our deliberations here in this Commission would make contribution for ECOSOC's input for the High Level Event of the General Assembly this year.

Mr. Chairman,

8. The Government of Pakistan, places high priority on social development to see Pakistan as a tolerant, vibrant and progressive society. With this backdrop, Pakistan has embarked upon a number of initiatives to improve the social indicators through increasing investment in social sector. Prominent steps include distribution of State land to landless tenants, launching poverty reduction strategy paper, availability of credit at easy terms, relief to drought affected areas and

implementation of the SAARC Social Charter. In addition, measures have also been initiated for employment generation and social integration.

9. Promoting productive employment is on the priority of the Government's economic agenda. The Government has initiated steps for formulation of a targeted employment policy linked with skill development programmes under its development activities by sharing best practices in the regional countries. Pakistan is pursuing a policy of enlightened moderation. We have laid special emphasis on facilitation of girls' education to eliminate the gender gap. In the next five-years, orientation programmes have been launched to mould the country into moderate, vibrant, just, tolerant and participatory society. Formal curriculum has been introduced for mainstreaming of religious Schools (Madaris). For this purpose, a project costing Rs. 5.6 billion is under implementation. For overall social integration, an amount of Rs. 103 billion has been earmarked in the education and training sector during the Plan 2005-10.

10. The key initiatives in other sectors include devolution of power, police and judicial reforms, tax reforms, civil service, political reforms and gender mainstreaming. Devolution of power is an important step in recent years, which has brought about a radical transformation in the political and administrative landscape of the country resulting in the promotion of local representation in the decision-making process regarding all issues including developmental activities.

11. Gender mainstreaming as a public policy has introduced political reforms and women are given adequate share in political representation both at National and Provincial level as well as local level.

12. In spite of the challenges involved, we feel confident that sharing of information through this forum about the best practices in various parts of the world, we shall greatly benefit to further strengthen the ongoing programmes for poverty reduction, employment promotion and social integration amongst the comity of nations, irrespective of class, creed and colour.

I thank you Mr. Chairman