



**Remarks by Permanent Representative of Pakistan, Ambassador
Munir Akram during the 62nd Session of the Commission on
Social Development**

(6 February 2024)

**Theme: Fostering social development and social justice through
social policies to accelerate progress on the implementation of
the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieve the
overarching goal of poverty eradication**

Madam Chairperson,

Despite our common aspiration to promote SDGs, the world is failing in its commitment to foster inclusive social development. At the midway point for implementation of the 2030 Agenda, half of the world's people are being left behind. On the basis of current trends, it is expected that, in 2030, there will still be 575 million people living in extreme poverty.

2. At the national level, Pakistan is committed to creating an inclusive society. Reducing poverty and addressing food insecurity are the core objectives of our flagship social protection scheme, Benazir Income Support Programme. Other elements of the Government's inclusive development strategy are: shelter homes in several cities to provide lodging and food for those in need; health coverage for the poor through special cards for provision of free-of-cost medical services; a Youth Empowerment Programme aimed at empowering youth and enhancing their employability through provision of loans, imparting entrepreneurial skills and training; targeted subsidies to farmers for seeds and pesticides, including a Kissan card to access digital platforms.

Madam Chairperson,

3. The 1995 Copenhagen Declaration recognizes that social development cannot be effectively pursued through social sectors alone, nor through piecemeal initiatives. Tackling poverty and promoting social justice require an orientation towards advancing social progress and well-being for all. We hope that the proposed World Social Development Summit in 2025 would be an opportunity to forge global consensus on concrete commitments towards further promoting inclusive and resilient societies.

4. As highlighted by the Secretary-General in his report for this Session of the Commission, inequality in access to fundamental social services, such as education, healthcare and social protection, exacerbates asymmetries and weakens social cohesion. The multiple ongoing crises have demonstrated the urgency of a fundamental shift in our commitment, solidarity, financing and action.

First, we must enable the developing countries to eradicate poverty and achieve the SDGs. The developing countries need financial support of around \$4.5 trillion per year to achieve SDGs. For this, resources must be mobilized from all possible sources including: fulfillment of the 0.7 percent ODA target; redistribution of the \$650 billion new SDRs; and concessional finance from all sources.

Second, for inclusive development, promotion of universal access to social protection and universal health coverage should be a priority. For this, developing countries need financial resources through multilateral mechanisms, including IFIs, in the form of grants – and not loans which will over-burden the developing countries.

Third, equal access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities including vocational and skills training, can help create more employment opportunities. Investment in early childhood education contributes significantly to breaking intergenerational cycles of poverty.

Fourth, the intersection of poverty, food insecurity and environmental degradation calls for a sustainable livelihood approach. This can be realized by reaffirming the commitment of achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner including through adequately financed climate adaptation and mitigation capacities.

Fifth, the root causes of conflicts, including situations of foreign occupation must be addressed. The more than seven-decade long, protracted disputes have deprived millions of people in Palestine and occupied Jammu and Kashmir from socio-economic development and access to justice.

Finally, the poorest 64 countries in the world spend more on debt repayments to rich countries and institutions than on health care. Preserving sustainable debt levels requires urgent reform of the international financial architecture.

I thank you