



General Assembly Meetings Coverage

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Fifty-first General Assembly
Plenary
103rd Meeting (AM)

GA/9256
20 June 1997

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTS AGENDA FOR DEVELOPMENT, AS RECOMMENDED BY ITS WORKING GROUP, AFTER OVER FOUR YEARS OF NEGOTIATIONS

Agenda Provides Comprehensive Definition of Development As Multidimensional Effort to Achieve Higher Quality of Life for All People

The General Assembly this morning adopted, without a vote, the Agenda for Development as recommended by its ad hoc open-ended working group which negotiated that document.

The Agenda, which was finalized in over four years, provides a comprehensive definition of development and synthesizes the results of various United Nations conferences. In addition, it attempts to cover all the development activities of the United Nations.

It states that development is a multidimensional undertaking to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. Economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development.

Sustained economic growth is essential to the economic and social development of all countries, in particular developing countries, the Agenda says. Such growth would enable countries to improve the standard of living of their people through the eradication of poverty, hunger, and through the provision of adequate shelter and the preservation of the environment's integrity.

Speaking after the adoption of the Agenda, the Assembly President, Razali Ismail (Malaysia), said the Agenda was a tangible effort to address issues associated with development from a common and collective perspective of the United Nations. The United Nations had a unique opportunity to act now to operationalize the Agenda, and it was within the power of Member States and the rest of the global community to ensure its success.

The representative of the Netherlands, speaking on behalf of the European Union and associated States, said the adoption of the Agenda should contribute to a renewed commitment to international cooperation for development and to the United Nations role in that area. Moreover, it would

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have a beneficial effect on negotiations for the forthcoming special session of the Assembly to review the outcome of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which might otherwise have suffered from a lack of agreement on some key issues.

The representative of the United Republic of Tanzania, speaking on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries, said the Agenda did not specifically acknowledge that unpredictable resources had been the main constraint in boosting development in developing countries. Further, the United Nations reform process seemed to target entities which pursued interests of developing States. In that context, the Assembly's supremacy in policy guidance had not been ascertained with regard to the Bretton Woods institutions, and the commitment of developed countries to United Nations resource targets remained equivocal.

The representative of the United States said that rather than accepting development assistance targets, it was more important to focus on the effectiveness of aid and on the policies of recipient States. As one of the largest donors, the United States would continue giving high-quality aid on a case-by-case basis that encouraged reforms in developing countries.

Statements were also made by the representatives of Brazil, Philippines, Indonesia, India, Guyana, China, Canada, Russian Federation, South Africa, Japan, Malaysia, Peru, Republic of Korea, Argentina, Malta, Lebanon, Sudan, Guatemala, Gambia, Lesotho and New Zealand.

The Assembly will meet again at 9:45 a.m. on Monday, 23 June, to begin its special session to review and appraise implementation of Agenda 21, the programme of action adopted by the UNCED.

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Assembly Work Programme

The General Assembly met this morning to consider the report of its ad hoc working group on an agenda for development (document A/51/45). The three-part report transmits the text of the agenda for development as approved by the working group and submitted to the plenary of the Assembly for adoption.

The final document, which has 287 paragraphs, contains a preamble and three chapters. It begins by providing a redefinition of the concept of development, an issue that was a major stumbling block during the negotiations. The agreed language, contained in paragraph 1 of the agenda, reads as follows:

"Development is one of the main priorities of the United Nations. Development is a multidimensional undertaking to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. Economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development.

"Sustained economic growth is essential to the economic and social development of all countries, in particular developing countries. Through such growth which should be broadly based so as to benefit all people, countries will be able to improve the standards of living of their people through the eradication of poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy and the provision of adequate shelter and secure employment for all, and the preservation of the integrity of the environment.

"Democracy, respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, transparent and accountable governance and administration in all sectors of society, as well as effective participation by civil society, are also an essential part of the necessary foundations for the realization of social- and people-centred sustainable development.

"The empowerment of women and their full participation on a basis of equality in all spheres of society is fundamental for development."

Chapter I, on "setting and objectives", states that development cannot be attained in the absence of peace and security or in the absence of respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Under conditions of war, and during periods of short-term emergencies and humanitarian needs, development efforts are often neglected, diminished or abandoned. Excessive military expenditures, arms trade, investment for arms production, acquisition and stockpiling have a negative impact on development prospects. With the relaxation of international tensions, the opportunity exists for reducing, as appropriate, military expenditures and investments for arms production and acquisition, consistent with national security requirements, in order to increase resources for social and economic development.

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Globalization of the world economy presents opportunities and challenges for the development process, as well as risks and uncertainties, the agenda states. As a result of the process of globalization and growing interdependence in the economic, social and environmental fields, an increasing number of issues cannot be effectively addressed by countries individually. Therefore, international cooperation is required. Furthermore, non-State actors with a global reach, such as transnational corporations, private financial institutions and non-governmental organizations, have important roles to play in the emerging network of international cooperation.

It further states that globalization and interdependence are deepening the need and creating greater opportunities for international cooperation. The problems and questions which globalization and interdependence bring in their wake, show that there clearly exists a shared, common interest among all countries in solving and answering them. International development cooperation, not only founded in solidarity, but also based on mutual interest and partnership, forms an essential part of this effort. With the waning of ideological confrontations, the rise in globalization, and the deepening of interdependence among nations, the historic opportunity has arisen for constructive dialogue among all countries, in particular among the developed and developing countries, and political mobilization for the promotion of international cooperation for development based on genuine partnership and mutuality of interests and benefits. "This Agenda for Development manifests our commitment to grasp this opportunity", the document states.

Addressing the critical socio-economic situation in Africa is of priority concern, the document stresses. Africa is the only region where poverty is expected to continue to increase substantially. Much of the continent suffers from, among other problems, inadequate physical and institutional infrastructure, poor human resource development, lack of food security, malnutrition, hunger, widespread epidemics and diseases, and unemployment and underemployment. Those conditions are further compounded by a number of conflict and disaster situations.

All those diverse limitations and constraints make it difficult for Africa to fully benefit from the processes of globalization and liberalization of trade and to integrate fully in the world economy, the document goes on. Increased mobilization of domestic and external resources for development, as well as their more effective use, are critical for the success of the economic and political reforms undertaken by African countries. International solidarity is fundamental to Africa's development, and international cooperation and support must necessarily complement the national resources mobilized by the African countries themselves.

Respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, democratic and effective institutions, combating corruption, transparent, representative and accountable governance, popular participation, an independent judiciary, the

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rule of law and civil peace are among the indispensable foundations for development, the document states. At the same time, it is reaffirmed that the right to development is a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of human rights. As stated in the Declaration on the Right to Development, the human person is the central subject of development. Development facilitates the enjoyment of all human rights, but the lack of development may not be invoked to justify the abridgement of internationally recognized human rights.

It goes on to state that democracy, which is spreading everywhere, has raised development expectations everywhere. Lack of their fulfilment risks the rekindling of non-democratic forces. Structural reforms that do not take social realities into account could destabilize democratization processes as they exacerbate the reaching of that fulfilment. While it is recognized that States have the primary responsibility in securing a sound and stable national political, economic and social environment for development, international support, at the request of interested governments, and the creation of a favourable international economic environment are crucial ingredients in that effort.

Under "objectives", the document states that "this Agenda for Development sets out a new framework for international cooperation, defines the role of the United Nations, and how both can make a particular contribution, and sets out the development priorities, as well as time-frames for implementation and keeps the implementation of the development agenda under political review".

Chapter II concerns "policy framework, including means of implementation". It addresses several issues, as follows: under economic development, "macroeconomic policies geared towards sustained economic growth and sustainable development", "international trade and commodities", "issues of internal and external finance" (including mobilization of domestic resources for development, external resources, external debt, and official development assistance (ODA), "role of multilateral financial institutions", "United Nations financing for development", "private investment flows", "peace dividend", "science and technology", "South-South cooperation", "regional economic cooperation", and "development in agriculture, industry and the services sector".

Under social development, the document addresses the following topics: "eradication of poverty and hunger", "employment", "social integration", "human resources development", and "human settlements".

The document also discusses the empowerment of women, rights of the child, environment and development (including the full implementation of Agenda 21 and other outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development), implementation of international conventions on the

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environment, and humanitarian issues and development (including the continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development; early warning, prevention, preparedness and reduction of natural disasters; response to other humanitarian emergencies; and refugees and displaced persons). Also considered are the following: participatory approach to development, actions related to countries in special situations (including Africa, least developed countries, small island developing States, land-locked developing countries, and countries with economies in transition).

Under means of implementation, the document addresses "mobilization of domestic resources for development", "external resources", "external debt", "official development assistance (ODA)", "role and resources of multilateral financial institutions, including regional development banks", "United Nations financing for development", "private investment flows", "qualitative aspects of development cooperation", and "capacity-building".

Chapter III concerns "institutional issues and follow-up". It states that among the many actors in international development, the United Nations, because of its unique universal character and impartiality and because of its physical presence in many parts of the world, plays a central role in promoting international development cooperation. "Through this Agenda, recommendations are made for a stronger, more effective and efficient United Nations so that it, and the United Nations system as a whole, can contribute better to development in all countries, in particular the developing countries, through the strengthening of its role in all relevant fields of international development cooperation." Institutional issues must, therefore, be addressed while safeguarding the transparent, democratic and truly universal character of the Organization and taking into account the overall ongoing processes of reform of the United Nations.

It goes on to state that the Organization will become more effective and relevant in responding to the needs of the Member States only as a result of ensuring: adequate and predictable funding; high-quality performance in the field of international cooperation for development; transparency and full accountability to its Member States; revitalization of its institutional structures; avoidance of overlapping and duplication; and responsiveness to changing conditions and trends.

Efforts are needed to continue the process of enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, the United Nations Secretariat, and other parts of the United Nations system, as well as the framework for operational activities, the agenda states. Furthermore, achieving greater coordination, coherence and complementarity among related activities and/or improving linkages between them will also contribute to strengthening the United Nations system's organizational structure.

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The document stresses that for the General Assembly to fully perform its Charter role, measures also have to be taken in addition to the strengthening of the General Assembly itself, to ensure that priorities set by the General Assembly are fully implemented and followed up by the entire United Nations system. The policy guidance role of the General Assembly in promoting international cooperation to solving international problems of an economic and social character should be fully exercised in all areas of development, including macroeconomic issues.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), as a principal organ of the General Assembly, has a contribution to make to strengthening policy-oriented debates in the Second Committee (Economic and Financial), it adds.

Further, in accordance with relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter, the Economic and Social Council must continue to strengthen its role as the central mechanism for coordination of the United Nations system and its specialized agencies and supervision of subsidiary bodies, in particular its functional commissions in the economic and social fields. The ongoing efforts to reform the Council call for more effective procedures and review of the work programme and working methods of the Council and should result in an increased capacity of the Council to provide overall guidance, monitor and coordinate the United Nations development system. Those reforms should be allowed to take root and be built upon.

In that context, the Council should, among other measures, in the context of its general segment -- whose primary function is that of an action-oriented review of the activities, reports, and recommendations of its subsidiary bodies -- avoid a repetition of the debates held in those bodies, and focus attention on major policy issues that require a prioritized and coordinated response from the United Nations system as a whole.

The agenda further states that the national plans and priorities constitute the only viable frame of reference for the national programming of operational activities within the United Nations system, which should be country-driven. In that context, individual mandates and complementarities of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations development system should be taken into account. Also, the Country Strategy Note -- which remains a voluntary initiative of the recipient countries -- should be formulated by interested recipient countries with the assistance of, and in cooperation with, the United Nations system under the leadership of the resident coordinator, in all recipient countries where the government so decides.

Reform efforts, in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions, should aim at, among others, enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of United Nations assistance at the country level, including through the Resident Coordinator System, the agenda states. The

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Secretary-General, in support of the intergovernmental process, has an important role to play in this respect. The resident coordinator, in full consultation with governments, should facilitate a coherent and coordinated United Nations follow-up to major international conferences at the field level.

The document stresses that UNCTAD is the focal point within the United Nations for the integrated treatment of development and interrelated issues in the areas of trade, finance, technology, investment and sustainable development. Having a comparative advantage in tackling trade-related development issues, UNCTAD should continue to facilitate the integration of developing countries and countries with economies in transition into the international trading system, in a complementary manner with the World Trade Organization.

Specialized agencies, as defined in Chapter IX of the United Nations Charter, play a vital role in furthering the implementation of various aspects of the global consensus on international cooperation for development and in promoting and securing the international cooperation needed, the agenda states. Activities, priorities and basic programmes of specialized agencies should be periodically assessed in order to ensure that they remain relevant to the interests of their Member States. In accordance with Article 58 of the Charter, the Organization shall make recommendations for the coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies. The Secretary-General is invited to make recommendations thereon.

The structure and functioning of, and the support services provided by, the Secretariat in the economic, social and related fields are important and must be strengthened and improved in order to increase the effectiveness of the United Nations in the field of development, according to the agenda. They cannot be considered in isolation from the overall management structure, desired lines of authority and decision-making processes of the Organization. In particular, a dispersion of efforts and resources leading to unnecessary overlapping of responsibilities and fragmentation of the decision-making processes in the Secretariat should be avoided. Furthermore, the relationship of the Secretary-General with the specialized agencies is crucial and needs to be further enhanced.

Ways and means should be explored in accordance with priorities set by the General Assembly to reallocate the savings resulting from reform and improved overall cost-effectiveness with a view to strengthening United Nations development activities, the agenda states, requesting the Secretary-General to present proposals to that end.

The agenda acknowledges that the Secretary-General, as the chief administrative officer of the Organization, is responsible for the functioning of the Secretariat in accordance with the United Nations Charter. The

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restructuring of the Secretariat is a vital part of the revitalization of the United Nations role in the economic, social and related fields. In order for the United Nations to act more effectively in support of development with greater coherence, coordination and complementarity, further reform should be aimed at:

-- Ensuring a comprehensive and effective implementation of the objectives of the agenda for development, as well as the relevant objectives of the Charter and the mandates entrusted by the policy-making organs;

-- Rationalizing the structure of the Secretariat in such manner that would improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its work, avoid duplication, meet the requirements of Member States and ensure accountability in its operations;

-- Ensuring transparency and effective implementation of recruitment procedures, principles and practices; ensuring the exclusively international character of the staff; securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, as well as a more effective application of the principles governing the recruitment of staff, including recruitment on as wide a geographical basis as possible, respecting the relevant articles of the Charter;

-- Ensuring that any reorganization of economic and social departments of the Secretariat and other proposals for Secretariat reform preserve and promote the independence, intellectual diversity and visibility of the United Nations in policy analysis;

-- Ensuring that initiatives for Secretariat reform consider measures already adopted and allow for these to take root. The restructuring of the Secretariat should be conducted in a manner that effectively meets the requirements of Member States and takes fully into account the development concerns of all Member States, in particular of the developing countries; and

-- Giving consideration to decentralization, as appropriate, from Headquarters to the regional and field levels, including the regional commissions, in order to enhance the United Nations capacity to provide stronger focus on regional problems and prospects in a cost-effective manner, taking into consideration the ongoing process of restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields.

The constructive contribution of non-governmental organizations and other major groups, including the private sector, to the implementation of the agenda for development should be encouraged, it states. The existing mechanisms for the involvement and participation of non-governmental organizations in United Nations activities should be fully utilized and, as

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appropriate, be further improved, taking into account the relevant rules of procedure of the United Nations and the outcome of the high-level open-ended working group of the General Assembly on the strengthening of the United Nations system.

It adds that the strengthening of collaboration between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions requires an integrated approach, encompassing a closer policy dialogue at the intergovernmental level on relevant areas of international development policy issues taking into account their respective competencies. In support of that dialogue, closer relationships should be developed between the United Nations, through the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and the Bretton Woods institutions, in particular the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Interim Committee and the World Bank/IMF Development Committee. In that regard, the General Assembly should play a more active role in global economic matters, including the deliberations on macroeconomic issues.

The intergovernmental follow-up of the agenda for development shall be undertaken by the General Assembly as the highest intergovernmental mechanism and the principal policy-making and appraisal organ of the United Nations system, the document states. The Assembly has called for the renewal of the dialogue on strengthening international cooperation for development through partnership, which should serve as an important mechanism through which the intergovernmental follow-up and assessment of this agenda and its implementation will be conducted. Such dialogue should also be used as an opportunity to discuss new and emerging issues concerning international cooperation for development.

The document concludes by stating that "a strong political commitment by the international community is needed to implement a strengthened international cooperation for development as reflected in this Agenda". The mobilization of domestic and international financial resources for development from all sources is an essential component for the comprehensive and effective implementation of that agenda. In that connection, enhanced efforts should be made for the mobilization and provision of new and additional financial resources for the development of developing countries. Despite an increase in private capital flows, ODA remains an essential source of external funding.

Also, developed countries reaffirm the commitments undertaken to fulfil as soon as possible the agreed United Nations targets of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product (GNP) for overall ODA and of 0.15 per cent of GNP for ODA for the least developed countries. Donor countries which have met the 0.15 per cent target will seek to undertake to reach 0.20 per cent. Further efforts are also needed to improve the effectiveness of ODA and to focus such aid on the poorest countries. Due consideration should be given to modalities for conducting an intergovernmental dialogue on the financing of development, taking into account the recommendation by the Secretary-General.

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Statements

HENRIQUE R. VALLE (Brazil) said development should remain one of the main priorities of the United Nations. Brazil had all along supported the "Group of 77" developing countries' initiative to establish an ad hoc working group of the General Assembly on the subject, which had concluded its work. The agenda for development integrated the consensus agreements reached on the United Nations conferences, defined what development meant, and would put the United Nations reforms in the context of the implementation of the United Nations role in the field of development. It also showed the international community's commitment to development and the revitalization of the United Nations' role in that field.

FELIPE MABILANGAN (Philippines) said only a few days ago there had been uncertainty whether negotiations on the agenda for development would come to a successful conclusion. In that regard, the role played by the two vice-chairmen of the working group on the agenda had been crucial in bringing the group's work to a successful conclusion. The agenda for development was a testament to the vibrancy of the United Nations, and he hoped it would invigorate the United Nations system and help in the implementation of the outcomes of the various United Nations conferences. He stressed that the agenda should be made a living document, and commitments made in it should be implemented. The Philippines fully supported it.

MOCHAMAD SLAMET HIDAYAT (Indonesia) said his country attached great importance to the eradication of poverty. The agenda for development was a blue print for asserting the United Nations system's central role in the area of development. In today's world, the need for an agenda for development had a new urgency. In fact, the agenda would impart a new coherence to the United Nations efforts in development. He hoped the agenda would ensure that development was never again marginalized. The next stage would involve the implementation of the provisions of the agenda, and that would be crucial. He urged Member States to work towards ensuring that the constructive spirit of cooperation continued in the agenda's implementation. It was only through a constructive dialogue that the agenda would be successfully implemented.

SATYABRATA PAL (India) said that, while globalization and the increased mobility of capital flows had helped improve some economies, it had also been accompanied by intensified poverty, unemployment and depravation in some instances. The challenge before the world was to change the very concept of growth and development and try to eliminate poverty and related economic and social ills. The Government of India felt that the premise for all policies must be subservience to the primacy of the human being and that all people must have shares in the dividends of economic prosperity.

Since market forces and economic growth alone might not be adequate to ensure development, further approaches should be taken to guarantee social

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justice, he said. Any economic model that did not produce benefits to broad sectors of the society would not be supported by those who did not gain from it. To face the new challenges, the international community must shape new strategies with clear visions and commit itself to implementing those visions in the spirit of cooperation. Without that, globalization and the peace and security it was expected to foster on the world would neither materialize nor be sustained. He expressed hope that the agenda's adoption would lead to an improved world.

SAMUEL R. INSANALLY (Guyana) said the agenda provided a framework for international cooperation on development, which itself had been defined. During the process of negotiations on the document, some delegations had expressed some apprehension regarding the outcome while others had even called for a United Nations council, dealing with economic and social and development issues, that would match the power and prestige of the Security Council.

As a representative of a small developing country, he expressed gratitude to all the chairmen of the Group of 77 and others who had helped shape the agenda, which would still be seen from different perspectives. Some would say that the glass was half empty, while others would describe it as half full. With the agenda's adoption, the Assembly should work to translate proposals advanced in the service of development into concrete results. He expressed hope that Member States would address in detail the urgent challenges of development that poor countries faced in the competitive markets of the global village.

WANG XUEXIAN (China) said the adoption of the agenda was a significant event in the United Nations system. One of its purposes was for it to help reverse the unhealthy trend of placing more emphasis on peace and security to the detriment of development issues. The agenda's adoption did not mean that goals had been achieved, but a first step towards realizing it. The bigger task before the international community was to effectively implement the agenda in an integrated and comprehensive way. There should not be a selective implementation based on the interpretation of a few countries. The major developed States should show goodwill and honour their commitments to make the agenda more than a mere scrap of paper. That paper should be translated into reality.

ROBERT R. FOWLER (Canada) said the document before the Assembly, being a result of compromises on all sides, fell short of Member States' original expectations. With the benefit of hindsight, they should not be surprised by their limited accomplishments. No less than in peace and security, the consideration of approaches to the complex challenges of development must be an ongoing task. As the United Nations must continuously recalibrate its "agenda" to meet changing challenges, the "agenda for development" being adopted today was a snapshot of that work in progress.

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Through the recent global conferences, he said, the international community had identified basic priorities in pursuing sustainable human development in today's world. The process of updating those priorities and assessing the progress made in meeting them would be taken up at next week's special session on Agenda 21, and in similar reviews of the conferences at Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing. The Assembly's action today should encourage the Secretary-General to include significant proposals, next month, for strengthening United Nations development operations.

ALEXANDER GORELIK (Russian Federation) said almost four years had passed since work began on the agenda for development. At times, negotiations had been arduous, however, all was well that ended well. He stressed that the working group on the agenda for development was the first of the United Nations working groups on reform to finish its work. The agenda was a balanced document which reflected the interests of all the groups of countries.

Much had been said about the marginalization of United Nations in development, he said. However, the ideas in the agenda had placed the Organization at the centre of development. He stressed that the adoption of the agenda demonstrated that the members of the United Nations were able to reach agreements despite obstacles. It was hoped that the same spirit of cooperation would guide the membership in the future. In that context, it was important to recognize that there were no opponents of development, however, there were many routes to it.

PETER G. SOAL (South Africa) said his country believed that today's formal adoption of the agenda for development by the Assembly represented an important milestone in the emergence of a critical global consensus on development matters in general, and the role of the United Nations in development matters in particular. That the entire United Nations membership could reach agreement on a matter so complex was testimony to the ability of the entire United Nations family of nations to rise to the occasion and to allow the dynamics of consensus-building to foster global partnership.

In adopting the agenda for development, the United Nations Member States had held forth a global promissory note and universal hope for the millions of people throughout the entire world who daily went without sufficient food and water, battled against diseases and natural disasters, lacked shelter and were deprived of the simple pleasures of human existence, he said. South Africa would look up to the agenda for development as a beacon of hope.

WATARU NSHIGAHIRO (Japan) said the successful conclusion of the work of the working group on the agenda for development would provide an impetus to other working groups which were working on reform in the United Nations. The conclusion of the agenda for development was a milestone in addressing the issue of development. However, the conclusion of the agenda did not mean that work in social and economic areas had been completed.

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The United Nations should adopt a new and innovative approach to development and, to that end, the international community should establish a common set of targets, and the developing countries should set up plans to achieve those targets, he said. Further, the United Nations should reform itself in the economic and social spheres so that it could perform better. He stressed that it was important that Member States not be satisfied with the mere adoption of the agenda. In that connection, efforts should be made to define a new development strategy based on a new global partnership between the developed and developing countries.

HASMY AGAM (Malaysia) said the agenda's adoption underscored the continued pivotal role of the United Nations in development in a way that would enhance its ability to develop well-defined positions, contributing to improved coordination within the United Nations system. By promoting a more comprehensive and effective approach to development and refocusing the centrality of the United Nations, the agenda would promote greater coherence in the development activities of the United Nations system as a whole.

In that context, the forging of greater cooperation between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions was critical for attaining those goals, he said. The attainment of those goals would depend on many factors, such as the contribution of all Member States in the developed and developing world in implementing the agenda. It would also depend on a partnership between those in the North and the South. The success of the working group on the agenda for development should inspire other working groups of the Assembly to attain similar success.

ITALO ACHA (Peru) called for adequate follow-up on the implementation of the agenda for development. The issue of development should be treated in an integrated manner, with follow-up of the various United Nations global conferences. That would help in the implementation of the agenda, which summarized the agreements reached at those meetings. While the United Nations funds and programmes involved in the field of development should work with greater coordination, they should not be merged into a single entity.

HYE RAN YOO (Republic of Korea) expressed hope that the adoption of the agenda would promote an integrated approach to the issue of development and enhance the work of the United Nations system in that field. She expressed hope that the agenda would be successfully implemented. The document's adoption marked a new beginning for cooperation, and the Republic of Korea would be an active supporter of the process of working towards development.

Action

The Assembly decided, without vote, to adopt the Agenda for Development, as contained in a draft resolution submitted in the report of the ad hoc open-ended working group on an agenda for development.

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Speaking after action, HORACIO H. FERNANDEZ (Argentina) said while his country supported the Agenda for Development, it wanted to express its reservation about the manner in which the Agenda dealt with the subject of the United Nations conferences. There had been no mention of the reports of those conferences. However, interpretative statements made at the time of the adoption of various conference programmes of action were included in those very reports. In that context, it was important that the sections on reproductive health included in the Agenda not be seen as a waiver of condemnation of abortion. Moreover, none of the proposals in the Agenda should be seen as justifying masculine or feminine sterilization. Argentina wanted its views to be reflected in the official records.

JOANNA DARMANIN (Malta) welcomed the Agenda for Development, but added that references in it to the programmes and platforms of action of the various United Nations conferences should be read in tandem with the reports of those conferences. Referring to the use of the term "reproductive health" in the Agenda, she said the term should not be seen as including induced abortion which was illegal in Malta.

DAUDI N. MWAKAWAGO (United Republic of Tanzania), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said the Group had been the main initiator of the proposal for the Agenda for Development. That imperative had been based on the realization that development was being marginalized in the mainstream of the intergovernmental processes of the United Nations. The balance between peace and development was being lost.

The process of globalization was increasing the marginalization of developing countries in the critical areas of international trade, money, finance, technology, information and communication flows. In that context, the imperative of launching an endeavour to chart out a framework to address development squarely was felt. The outcome of that resolve, the Agenda for Development, would guide Member States in addressing development issues at the national and international levels.

He stressed that there was a need to evolve a genuine partnership which recognized the disadvantaged situation of developing countries in the global economy. That would provide an imperative for developed countries to have the political will to support development efforts of the developing countries. Such support could be provided by concessional financial flows, preferential treatment in market access, durable debt relief measures and transfer of technology.

In that connection, he said predictable resources and institutional reforms were crucial to maximize the impact of United Nations operations in development activities. Further, it was important that developing countries own their development process through the formulation of strategies, with the donor community and the United Nations system playing a supportive role.

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He regretted that the Agenda lacked specific acknowledgement that deficient and unpredictable provision of resources had been the main constraint in dynamizing the process of development in developing countries. Also, there was an apparent emphasis that the United Nations system should function more effectively, primarily through rigorous reform process. Further, that reform process seemed to target more the United Nations entities which undertook the tasks of greater interest to developing countries.

He noted that the definition of development was much more tilted towards the components of environmental protection and management. Also, the commitment of developed countries on fulfilling the agreed United Nations targets, especially on resources flows, was equivocal. The supremacy of the General Assembly in policy guidance had not yet been ascertained with regard to the relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions, he concluded.

NICOLAAS H. BIEGMAN (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Union, as well as Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovak Republic, Iceland and Liechtenstein, said the Union welcomed the adoption of the Agenda for Development by the General Assembly. It emphasized the strategic importance of achieving an agreement on the Agenda for a number of reasons.

Firstly, he said, the Agenda, while building upon the results of major United Nations conferences, reflected in an integrated manner development issues in a global context that had changed dramatically in recent years. Secondly, it gave guidance on how the United Nations should adapt to the changing world. Thirdly, the adoption of the Agenda should contribute to a renewed commitment to international cooperation for development and to the United Nations role in that area and strengthen its credibility. Finally, the agreement might have a beneficial effect on negotiations for the Assembly's special session, which might otherwise have suffered from a lack of agreement on some key issues.

Whether the Agenda contained sufficient value or value added on substances remained to be assessed, he said. In a few instances, texts in the Agenda had already been agreed on more than a year ago and had lost some of its topicality. In other instances, attempts had been made to take some steps back from recent agreements. The Union emphasized, in particular, the consensus of the Vienna Declaration on Human Rights. However, it believed that, on balance, chapters I and II seemed to contain a reasonably solid conceptual basis.

The Union had hoped that the third chapter, on institutions, had been injected with more far-reaching views in order to adapt the United Nations as an organization and as an intergovernmental forum to present-day realities in the social, economic and related fields, he said. The outcome in that respect had been very modest indeed. However, fortunately it did not close the door

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to urgently needed changes for a stronger and more focused United Nations as an agent for development. Ultimately, the importance of the Agenda would depend on the follow-up given by the membership of the United Nations to its main components.

VICTOR MARRERO (United States) said the Agenda embodied the international community's consensus that development meant sustainable development; that improving the quality of life of all people required integrating economic and social development and environmental protection, which were interdependent components of sustainable development. Such understanding confirmed that, while the details of integrating economic, social and environmental policies varied from State to State, the international community had agreed on sustainable development as a common paradigm.

He reaffirmed the United States' commitments under Agenda 21 to the empowerment and full participation of civil society. In particular, the role of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as the role of women in achieving sustainable development. It recognized the contribution of local authorities to implementing Agenda 21 and supported the local Agenda 21 initiatives, which were essential to sustainable development.

Turning to the Agenda's paragraph 57, he expressed the United States' belief that countries should enact effective laws and policies providing for high levels of protection in order to help ensure that trade liberalization contributed to sustainable development. It understood the language at the end of the second sentence of that paragraph to mean that measures adopted for environmental purposes should not "constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a means of disguised restriction on trade".

On paragraphs 194, 214 and 286, he said the United States had reiterated its policy that it had not affirmed or undertaken an "overseas development assistance target". Rather than accepting a target, it was more important to focus efforts on the effectiveness and quality of aid and the policies of the recipient State. The United States was one the largest aid donors in terms of volume and would continue providing high-quality aid on case-by-case bases, that encouraged reforms in developing countries. References to particular language in the Agenda must retain the overall balance in the document. That particularly applied to the interdependent elements of paragraph 1.

HICHAM HAMDAN (Lebanon) expressed support for the statement by the United Republic of Tanzania, on behalf of the Group of 77. Paragraph 34 of the Agenda, he said, had mentioned the United Nations global conferences of the last few years. And, paragraph 35 had gone further to call on States to implement targets set at those global conferences. The statements in those and related paragraphs did not annul the reservations that had previously been expressed by the delegation of Lebanon, which remained valid.

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HAMID ALI MOHAMED ELTINAY (Sudan) said the right to development should be respected and strengthened. But references in the working group's report to the programmes of action of the Cairo and Beijing conferences encompassed reservations that had been expressed by the Sudan on the basis of its religious perspectives. Those reservations were still valid.

SILVIA CRISTINA CORADO-CUEVAS (Guatemala) said the Agenda's adoption reaffirmed the importance of the United Nations in development and what should be done in that field. References to United Nations conferences should be in keeping with the reports adopted at those meetings.

MOMODOU KEBBA JALLOW (Gambia) said the negotiation of the Agenda for Development had been difficult and expansive in scope. However, it had been carried out with a deep sense of commitment to the United Nations role in development. The implementation of the document would require an equal measure of commitment. He also stressed the need for enhancing development cooperation between the developed and the developing, the rich and the poor and the big and the small nations. In addition, he called on all Member States to participate in the Agenda's implementation.

RAZALI ISMAIL (Malaysia), President of the General Assembly, congratulated the two vice-chairmen of the working group on the Agenda for Development, Percy Mangoela (Lesotho) and Michael Powles (New Zealand). The Agenda for Development was timely as it underlined the United Nations continued catalytic role and active involvement in development matters. It served as a welcome fillip to the special session on Agenda 21 beginning next Monday. Already, the spirit of cooperation which had brought about the Agenda had influenced ongoing preparatory efforts for the special session.

Development was the most important task facing the humanity today, which continued to be confronted by poverty and other forms of socio-economic problems, he said. While some parts of the world had enjoyed economic growth and sustainable development, many had not. In the last few years, the United Nations had started a process of re-examination and redefinition of development, taking into account the progress achieved in the last half century.

In that context, he continued, the Agenda for Development was a tangible effort to address issues associated with development from a common and collective perspective of the United Nations. The United Nations had a unique opportunity to act now to operationalize the Agenda for Development. It was within the power of Member States and the rest of the global community to ensure the Agenda's success.

He expressed the hope that the successful conclusion of the working group on the Agenda for Development would encourage other working groups to conclude their work successfully and soon. Success in the working groups

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clearly enhanced the image and relevance of the United Nations in the eyes of the peoples of the world for which the United Nations was established.

PERCY MANGOALEA (Lesotho), a vice-chairman of the working group on the Agenda for Development, said it was with pride that Lesotho had been associated with the task of elaborating the Agenda. The Agenda was being adopted when the world stood at the threshold of a new century. Today, there were fears of marginalization. In that context, it was comforting to note that international cooperation was still alive and well. He also expressed gratitude to the Assembly President and representatives of Member States, as well as Secretariat officials, for their cooperation in the successful conclusion of work on the Agenda.

MICHAEL POWLES (New Zealand), a vice-chairman of the working group on the Agenda for Development, thanked delegates for their support in successfully concluding work on the Agenda for Development. He also thanked the officials of the Secretariat for their professionalism.

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