

**STATEMENT BY MR. JAIPAL REDDY, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT ON AGENDA ITEM 89:
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIRST UNITED NATIONS DECADE FOR THE ERADICATION
OF POVERTY AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF 57TH SESSION OF UNGA ON OCTOBER
30, 2002**

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to thank the Secretary General for the report submitted under the agenda item on the "Implementation of the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty". We also associate ourselves with the statement made by Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77.

Mr. Chairman,

2. Poverty is multi-dimensional, expressing itself in the form of hunger, malnutrition, illiteracy and disease, as well as lack of basic necessities like water, shelter and food. Moreover, poverty creates a vicious cycle. It feeds on itself by breeding disease, malnutrition and lack of opportunities, which in turn leads to further poverty. The challenge for any poverty eradication policy is to break this cycle.

3. The annual consideration of this agenda item provides us with an opportunity to take yearly stock of progress achieved in eradicating poverty, which, in our view, must be the primary task of the United Nations in the social and economic fields.

Mr. Chairman,

4. We live in a world in which disparities are growing. As stated in the Human Development Report 2002, "the level of inequality worldwide is grotesque". The world's richest 1% of people receive as much income as the poorest 57%. Out of the 6 billion inhabitants in the world, 2.8 billion people live on less than 2 dollars a day. In a globalising world, poverty in one part of the world is a threat to prosperity elsewhere. Poverty eradication, therefore, cannot be treated as the exclusive responsibility of individual nations. It is a shared responsibility that requires a global response. In the Millennium Summit, our leaders recognized this and resolved to free men, women and children from abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to make the right to development a reality for everyone and to free the entire human race from want. We concur with the assessment contained in the report of the Secretary General on the Implementation of the UN Millennium Declaration that there is no autopilot, no rising tide of the global economy, that will guarantee that the Millennium Development Goals would be reached by 2015. Concerted actions that are specifically targeted towards the welfare of the poor will be required at the national and international levels if we are to achieve our collective goal of poverty eradication.

5. In the Asian region 500 million people, the largest number in the world, live on less than a dollar a day. For the region and for India, eradication of poverty remains a major challenge. India has evolved a national strategy that complements acceleration of economic growth with focus on the provision of basic services for improving the quality of life of the poorer segments through specific and targeted poverty eradication programmes. India has been successful in reducing poverty from 38.9% in 1987 to 23.3% in 2000 and, in accordance with its national plans, aims to reduce poverty to 20% by 2007 and to 10% by 2012. We hope that our efforts would contribute to global efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goal of halving by 2015 the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than a dollar a day.

Mr. Chairman,

6. As mentioned by my delegation on many previous occasions, efforts of developing countries to eradicate poverty by themselves would be insufficient. Developing countries need the support of the international community. The High-Level Panel on Financing for Development estimated that an additional US\$ 50 billion in ODA alone was required if the Millennium Development Goals are to be met. It is regrettable that ODA declined to US \$ 51.4 billion in 2001 from US \$ 53.7 billion in 2000 reaching its lowest level of 0.22% of GNP. There is need to reverse this trend. We have noted the announcements made by developed countries at the Monterrey Conference and the Johannesburg Summit this year to increase their ODA contributions. We urge that the funds that have been pledged be made available and further funding commitments be made so as to reach the agreed ODA target of 0.7% of GNP. In addition, we call for a fair, equitable and non-discriminatory trading system that would address the concerns of developing countries and would ensure enhanced and predictable market access for products of export interest to developing countries so that developing countries can take advantage of trade liberalization. Furthermore, stability in the international financial and monetary systems is necessary for efforts of developing countries to eradicate poverty.

Mr. Chairman,

7. We welcome the Global Millennium Development Campaign initiated by the Secretary General and appointment of Ms. Eveline-Herfkens as its Executive Coordinator. This Campaign should focus on generating a public opinion in developed countries that appreciates the need for making available financial resources for poverty eradication programmes in developing countries. We are confident that such a campaign would result in enhanced funds for development. This would be the sole criterion on which India would judge the success of the Campaign.

8. We hope that the General Assembly would finalize the modalities for the establishment of the World Solidarity Fund in its current session. We call on the international community to contribute generously to the Fund, which we agree could be operated by UNDP. We welcome the suggestion in the Secretary General's report that UNDP reports to the General Assembly about the working of the Solidarity Fund. This Fund should support requests received from national governments for financing community-based projects.

Mr. Chairman,

9. We share the view that it is time to move into an implementation phase if we are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. However, judged by the record of the last two years, we are far from our goals. In the remaining twelve years, we would need to make progress; otherwise the Millennium Declaration would serve only as a grim reminder of human needs neglected and promises unmet. It should not be said at the end of 2015, as stated in Secretary General's report on the Eradication of Poverty, that the only lesson learnt was that the goals could not be met due to lack of international cooperation.

Thank You, Mr. Chairman.