



Permanent Mission of The State of Eritrea
To the United Nations, New York

Statement by

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On agenda item 27: Social Development

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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me first to extend my delegation's congratulations to you and the other members of the Bureau on your elections to steer the work of the Third Committee. My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the distinguished representatives of Fiji and Ethiopia who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the African Group, respectively.

Mr. Chairman,

The Copenhagen Social Summit of 1995, 24th Special Session of the General Assembly and the Millennium Development Goals of 2000, with several social goals, have all been serving as very important frameworks in guiding our policies and actions at all levels. These frameworks have certainly built the needed consensus that puts people at the centre of the development agenda with the aim of creating a society for all, to which my delegation subscribes fully to these noble objectives.

Navigating through the prevailing global economic and political crises, characterized by rising youth unemployment, pervasive poverty and changing climatic condition, has become increasingly illusive and difficult for many developing and developed nations in the fulfilment of the goals of the social development.

Mr. Chairman,

Eritrea believes while better cooperation and solidarity are essential at all levels for the goals of the social development transcend national boundaries, national governments must remain engaged and committed to the attainment of a sustained social progress. National governments must have the needed policy space in order to be able to develop home-grown initiatives and strategies that reflect country specific conditions and priorities. This policy approach would be pivotal in advancing the internationally agreed development goals in particular as we have begun to embark on the post-2015 development agenda.

Eritrea's social policy, guided by social justice and social cohesion, aims at promoting and protecting equal rights and equal participation and equitable sharing of resources among its population. It has been engaged in the mobilization of its limited human, financial and natural resources to meet its developmental challenges.

Consistent with many UN resolutions that call on Member States to renew their commitments by ensuring that young men and women are at the center of the development agenda, the Eritrean youth have been entrusted with the heavy

responsibility of acting as the main agents of change in a society that suffered from the consequences of years of war. Their full participations have been instrumental in the overall national efforts to address root causes of poverty and underdevelopment, especially programs related to food security, building of basic infrastructure, and restoration of the environment, as well as ensuring peace and security. Cognizant of the challenges facing the youth at the national and international levels, on top of the regular free educational opportunities, the Government has embarked on upgrading their capacity through vocational trainings and practical workshops so to determine their future. Furthermore, as part of the newly launched governmental reorganization and restructuring programmes aimed at ensuring efficiency and productivity, the Government has reaffirmed a rigours participation of the youth in all matters, including political leadership.

The Government, with the support of Eritreans in the Diaspora, has taken the responsibility of supporting families hard hit by the war, especially to the families and their children who paid their lives for freedom. Free education and trainings are provided to all from the primary to the tertiary levels to ensure sustainability. Such developmental strategy has allowed for significant expansion of basic social services, in particular to rural areas where essential services were either limited or had been non-existent. The nation's huge investment in basic infrastructure and expansion of social services has improved the standard of living of its people. Child and maternal mortality rates have been dramatically reduced and life expectancy has increased from 49 years average in 1991 to nearly 63 years average at the moment. Indeed, Eritrea is on track to achieve several of the MDGs. Yet, there still remains a lot to be done. To this end, the Government has outlined a comprehensive development programme. The recent exploitation of Eritrea's mineral resources and the creation of conducive investment opportunities will enhance implementation of this ambitious programmes and projects.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, Eritrea is committed to ensuring social protection to all its citizens, and particularly to those that are disadvantaged and persons with disabilities; and the key to moving forward the socio-economic agenda is to remain fully committed to the objectives we all pledged to achieve by enhancing coordination and cooperation at all levels, including among the UN system.

Thank you