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Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

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Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

This report provides information on the deliberations and major activities of the intergovernmental bodies responsible for reviewing follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session on social development. The report also focuses on the outcomes of the intergovernmental conferences and summits organized since the twenty-fourth special session and their link with activities to promote the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action adopted at the World Summit and the further initiatives of the twenty-fourth special session. In addition, the report provides information on relevant activities of the Division for Social Policy and Development to promote implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit and the special session.

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Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	1	3
II. Overview of follow-up undertaken in intergovernmental bodies	2–19	3
III. Linkages with other United Nations conferences and summits	20–47	6
IV. Contributions of the United Nations system	48	11
V. Activities of the Division for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs	49–58	11
VI. Conclusion	59	13

I. Introduction

1. The present report responds to General Assembly resolution 56/177 of 19 December 2001, in which the Assembly decided to include in the provisional agenda of the fifty-seventh session the item entitled “Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly”, and requested the Secretary-General to submit a progress report. This is the latest in a series of reports to provide information on activities undertaken to promote social development since the holding of the World Summit in 1995.¹ The reports submitted to the General Assembly during the two years since the twenty-fourth special session in June 2000 focused on follow-up at the national level and on activities undertaken by the United Nations system to implement the outcomes of the World Summit and the special session.

II. Overview of follow-up undertaken in intergovernmental bodies

A. General Assembly

2. The debate at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly on the “Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly” took place for the first time within the Third Committee. The item had been considered in plenary sessions of the General Assembly since 1995. Representatives of more than 50 countries as well as of a number of international organizations addressed the issue, which took on greater intensity and urgency as a result of the events of 11 September. Several speakers referred to the increased need for social development and poverty eradication to promote just and stable societies and to address the root causes of terrorism, in particular as they relate to poverty, disempowerment, inequality and social exclusion. Reference was made to the proclamation of 2001 as the International Year of Dialogue among Civilizations and the need to reduce the gap in understanding among peoples of different nationalities and religious beliefs.

3. It was noted that the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session were reinforced by the adoption of the

Millennium Declaration² and that the social agenda was integral to all development efforts. The importance of integrating social and economic policy, which would be the priority theme of the Commission for Social Development at its fortieth session, was highlighted. Other critical objectives included: fostering an enabling environment for social development; promoting social justice and equity; ensuring adequate social protection; and reducing vulnerability. It was also considered important to promote the sharing of experiences and best practices in these areas.

4. Delegations addressed numerous specific social development concerns, such as the spread of HIV/AIDS and continued widespread illiteracy. Many speakers referred to the impact of rapid globalization, which had widened socio-economic disparities among countries of the world and, in some cases, increased marginalization and exclusion. While economic progress had been achieved, it represented islands of prosperity in an ocean of unspeakable poverty. The pressures of globalization also made it difficult for some countries to implement the outcomes of the World Summit and the special session.

5. By adopting resolution 56/177, the General Assembly, *inter alia*, also encouraged coordinated and mutually reinforcing follow-up to the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action adopted at the World Summit,³ the further initiatives of the special session and the Millennium Declaration. The Assembly took note of the *Report on the World Social Situation, 2001*⁴ and requested the Secretary-General to submit future reports on a biennial basis.

6. In related action, in its resolution 56/211 of 21 December 2001, the General Assembly considered the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields, welcomed the adoption of resolution 2001/21 by the Economic and Social Council and decided that it would examine how best to address the reviews of the implementation of their outcomes, including their format and periodicity.

7. Another related activity was the observance of 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers, declared by the General Assembly to heighten public awareness and support for volunteerism. During the year, more than 120 national committees hosted activities to

promote volunteerism in 200 cities. At its fifty-sixth session, the Assembly devoted plenary meetings on 5 December 2001 to mark the observance of the year. Discussions focused on ways the United Nations system and Governments could support volunteering. In this regard, on 5 December 2001, the Assembly adopted resolution 56/38, which contained recommendations on support for volunteering,⁵ commended the ongoing contributions of all volunteers to society, encouraged all people to become more engaged in voluntary activities and decided that on 5 December 2002, International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development, two plenary meetings at the fifty-seventh session will be devoted to discussions on the outcome of the International Year of Volunteers and its follow-up.

B. Economic and Social Council

8. The Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 2001, considered the question of integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits and adopted resolution 2001/21, in which, *inter alia*, it recalled that the goals and targets in the economic, social and related fields contained in the Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, supplemented by the outcomes of their reviews, constitute a comprehensive basis for actions at the national, regional and international levels. The Council decided to strengthen links with relevant functional commissions and other relevant bodies of the United Nations system, including regional commissions, in follow-up to conferences and summits, by reviewing progress in the implementation of cross-cutting issues. It also decided to strengthen links with the General Assembly by bringing to its attention overall policy issues that might emerge from such follow-up and might require its consideration.

9. To improve the working methods of its functional commissions, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 2001/27 of 26 July 2001, which, *inter alia*, encouraged the commissions to consider how best to ensure continuity in the work of their successive bureaux, to continue to keep their working methods under review and to share more systematically the outcome of their work. The Council also invited the commissions to provide further inputs into its work on

means of implementation, including the role of resource mobilization, capacity-building, research and data collection and information- and knowledge-sharing in their respective areas, with a particular focus on impact, gaps, good practices and lessons learned and the types of capacity-building most commonly sought in the implementation of the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Millennium Summit.

C. Commission for Social Development

10. The Commission for Social Development held its fortieth session in New York from 11 to 21 and 27 February 2002. The Commission undertook its annual review of progress achieved and lessons learned in the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session in the context of its consideration of the priority theme, "Integration of social and economic policy". To prepare for the Commission's discussion of the priority theme, the Secretariat organized three expert workshops on the sub-themes identified in the Commission's multi-year programme of work: a meeting on "Expenditures in the social sector as a productive factor", which was organized in cooperation with the Government of Costa Rica and held at San José from 11 to 13 June 2001; a meeting on "Social assessment as a policy tool", which was organized in cooperation with the Government of Bulgaria and held at Sofia from 30 October to 1 November 2001; and a meeting on the "Social impact of macroeconomic policy", which was held at United Nations Headquarters from 5 to 7 November 2001. Each meeting produced a report, excerpts from which were annexed to the report of the Secretary-General to the Commission.⁶

11. During the general debate, speakers provided national experiences and perspectives on specific topics related to the priority theme as well as to other cross-cutting issues relating to social development. Panel discussions, a segment for the participation of non-governmental organizations and a question and answer segment with selected entities of the United Nations system were organized to open the discussions to a broad range of actors and to increase opportunities for the exchange of experiences.

12. After lengthy discussions, the Commission adopted agreed conclusions on its priority theme.⁷ The

agreed conclusions were transmitted to the Economic and Social Council for its consideration and as a contribution to the high-level segment of its substantive session of 2002. They were also transmitted to the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

13. In the agreed conclusions, the Commission reaffirmed the interdependence between social and economic policies and the importance of promoting their integration. It stated the importance of broadening the scope of sound macroeconomic policy to integrate social and economic policy. In order to achieve this, better understanding of the causal linkages between macroeconomic policy and social impact was required. Social impact analysis and assessments were useful tools to promote a more participatory and people-centred process of policy-making as well as to provide a social perspective in policy conceptualization and analysis. Investments in the social sectors are productive investments. The establishment and enhancement by Governments of social security systems and access to basic social services for all are important components of social development policies. Social safety nets should not preclude the creation of a comprehensive social protection/social security system.

14. The Commission stated that social sector expenditure should be linked to the achievement of the social development goals included in the outcome documents of the World Summit for Social Development, the twenty-fourth special session and the Millennium Summit. It recognized that substantial increases in official development assistance (ODA) and other resources were required for developing countries to achieve agreed development goals and objectives.

15. The Commission invited Governments to adopt holistic, integrated, comprehensive and consistent public policies to further development, eradicate poverty, fulfil the commitments of the World Summit for Social Development and the further initiatives of the twenty-fourth special session and attain the Millennium Declaration development goals. Actions that Governments could take included: improving and restructuring national tax regimes and administration to establish equitable and efficient systems and, inter alia, taking measures to reduce tax evasion; promoting and enhancing fiscal and financial sector reforms for better domestic resource mobilization and reallocating public resources for investment in social development;

incorporating social impact analysis into the budget formulation process and improving efficiency and effectiveness in government expenditures; developing or strengthening mechanisms to promote broad-based dialogue and coordination among all government bodies responsible for socio-economic policy formulation; forging partnerships with the private sector and non-governmental organizations to contribute to the financing and provision of social services; promoting a gender-sensitive and participatory approach through the involvement of communities, non-governmental organizations and social partners as well as vulnerable or disadvantaged groups in the formulation and implementation of development strategies; and creating and/or strengthening institutions for social and economic research, evaluation and policy-making.

16. The Commission invited relevant funds and programmes, organizations and the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, including the international financial institutions, as well as multilateral and bilateral donors, to continue assisting and strengthening their cooperation with the developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and countries with economies in transition, in their social and economic development efforts, inter alia, by: strengthening their capacities to address the obstacles that hinder their participation in an increasingly globalized economy; providing technical and financial assistance, upon request, to strengthen national capacities to integrate social and economic policy and to achieve social development objectives; cooperating to further improve policies and development strategies, both nationally and internationally, to enhance aid effectiveness; urging developed countries that have not done so to make concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) as ODA to developing countries and 0.15 per cent to 0.20 per cent of GNP as ODA to least developed countries and encouraging developing countries to build on progress achieved in ensuring that ODA is used effectively; implementing development-oriented and durable solutions to external debt and debt-servicing problems of developing countries; supporting and conducting research, in particular empirical research and social impact assessment, to evaluate the interaction between social and economic policies, to reconcile policy agendas and to examine more closely the mechanisms by which social expenditures act as a productive factor in social

and economic development; ensuring coordination and the full and active participation of the United Nations system in efforts to promote social development; and promoting and facilitating greater regional cooperation and sharing of experiences within the United Nations system, including the regional commissions, and within other regional organizations.

17. The Commission noted that the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration are, to a large extent, derived from the commitments undertaken at the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session and that, therefore, promotion of those commitments supports the achievement of the goals of the Millennium Declaration. In particular, concerning the goal of the Millennium Declaration to create an environment conducive to development and the elimination of poverty, it was noted that the concept of an enabling environment for social development was first established at the World Summit, and that the outcome documents of both the Summit and the special session contain a comprehensive catalogue of recommendations that define and promote such an enabling environment.

18. Efforts to eradicate poverty are integral to the Commission's ongoing follow-up to the World Summit and the twenty-fourth special session, as well as to the implementation of the goals of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006). The goal of reducing by one-half the proportion of people living in absolute poverty by 2015 was first adopted by the international community at the twenty-fourth special session, which also invited the Economic and Social Council to consolidate ongoing initiatives and actions with a view to launching a global campaign to eradicate poverty. As part of its multi-year programme of work, the Commission will undertake a review of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty in 2006.

19. At the twenty-fourth special session, the General Assembly specifically requested the Economic and Social Council to consider, through the Commission for Social Development, ways of sharing experiences and practices in social development, in order to assist Member States in the development of policies to promote the goals of the World Summit. In this context, it is noted that the Commission, at its forty-first session in 2003, will address the sub-theme "Sharing experiences and practices in social development" as part of its deliberations on the priority

theme "National and international cooperation for social development".

III. Linkages with other United Nations conferences and summits

20. The World Summit for Social Development, which was held at Copenhagen from 6 to 12 March 1995, adopted the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action to promote social development globally. The General Assembly held its twenty-fourth special session, entitled, "World Summit for Social Development and Beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world", at Geneva from 26 June to 1 July 2000. The special session marked the five-year review of the World Summit and renewed attention to important issues of global social development.

21. The three core issues discussed at the World Summit and the special session were: the eradication of poverty; the promotion of full and productive employment; and the enhancement of social integration. In addition, commitments were made and initiatives were launched to: promote an enabling environment for social development in order to achieve equality and equity between women and men; promote human resource development, in particular in the areas of education and health care; accelerate the economic, social and human resource development of Africa and the least developed countries; improve structural adjustment programmes; increase and utilize more efficiently the resources allocated to social development; and strengthen frameworks for cooperation at the international, regional and subregional levels. All these issues are interrelated and closely connected, and they concern all countries, regardless of their level of development.

22. Since the twenty-fourth special session, the United Nations has organized conferences and summits on a wide range of development issues. All of these meetings derived at least part of their agendas from the issues that concerned the World Summit and the special session. Each, in turn, has encouraged continued and concerted action for social development at national and international levels. There is a clear and close link between the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit and the special session and the promotion and follow-up to these conferences and

summits. The sections that follow reflect upon how the core issues of the social development agenda have influenced and, in turn, been influenced by, the convening of United Nations conferences and summits during the past two years.

A. Millennium Summit

23. At the Millennium Summit of the General Assembly, held in September 2000, the Assembly adopted, in its resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000, the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The Declaration reiterated values and principles, set out goals and objectives of the international community and embodied a number of specific commitments to improve conditions for all people in the new century. As noted by the Commission for Social Development, the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration to a large extent derived from the commitments undertaken at the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session.

24. Among the many areas of convergence between the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, the Programme of Action and the Millennium Summit, the area of primary concern is the eradication of poverty. Poverty remains the fundamental problem of mankind and one of the most significant results of the World Summit was to place the goal of eradicating poverty at the centre of national and international policy agendas. For the first time there was talk of ridding the world of the injustice of poverty. This sentiment is echoed in the Millennium Declaration: "We will spare no effort to free our fellow men, women and children from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected. We are committed to making the right to development a reality for everyone and to freeing the entire human race from want."

25. The commitment to eradicate poverty, adopted at the Copenhagen Summit and reiterated five years later at the Millennium Summit, has increasingly influenced the policies and planning of Governments and of bilateral and multilateral development partners. Many Governments have set national poverty reduction targets and formulated poverty eradication plans and strategies, including by promoting employment and developing or reinforcing tools to evaluate progress. Progress has been uneven, however, revealing

continuing disparities in access to basic social services, including a lack of access to quality education. Of particular concern is the increasing feminization of poverty and the uneven access for girls to education.

26. Among the targets endorsed by the twenty-fourth special session was the reduction of the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by half by 2015. This target was taken up at the Millennium Summit, which resolved to halve the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than \$1 a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger by 2015 and, by the same date, to halve the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water.

27. With regard to specific actions to promote poverty eradication, the twenty-fourth special session encouraged Governments to implement pro-poor growth strategies to develop and utilize the potential of people living in poverty. An important step is to focus on how people in poverty define their situation and their needs. Many people may consider certain aspects of poverty, including social exclusion, insecurity or lack of dignity, to be just as important as insufficient income and policies to fight poverty must take these views into account. It is important that anti-poverty policies treat people as active participants, rather than passive recipients, and that they seek to empower people and assist them to integrate into society and the labour force. The goal should be to provide people with opportunities rather than benefits. These efforts can be supported by action to achieve targets relating to access to primary education and basic health services.

B. Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries

28. The Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries, which was held at Brussels from 14 to 20 May 2001, reviewed the socio-economic progress in the least developed countries during the 1990s and the progress made in international support measures during that decade and adopted the Brussels Declaration⁸ and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010.⁹ The Programme of Action contains commitments at the national and international levels on policies and measures to accelerate the development process in those countries, drawing on experiences and lessons learnt and building on the outcome of recent

conferences and summits in the specific context of the least developed countries.

29. The overarching goal of the Programme of Action is to make substantial progress towards halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and suffering from hunger by 2015 and to promote the sustainable development of the least developed countries. This goal echoes the objective of the Millennium Declaration in the context of the least developed countries. It is supported by the commitments undertaken at the World Summit for Social Development and in the further initiatives for social development adopted at the twenty-fourth special session.¹⁰

30. The World Summit for Social Development was particularly noteworthy because it devoted a specific commitment to Africa and the least developed countries. Commitment 7 set out to accelerate the economic, social and human resource development of Africa and the least developed countries. The further initiatives agreed upon at the special session established a range of activities across various sectors to achieve this commitment. Promoting achievement of these further initiatives will also promote implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries. Among its recommendations, the special session called upon Governments to promote an enabling environment that would facilitate the integration of Africa and the least developed countries into the global economy and promote their participation in the multilateral trading system. It stressed the importance of strengthening capacities through improved education and human resource development and enhancing productive capacity and competitiveness, which should encourage skilled and highly educated Africans to remain in the region and should utilize and further develop their skills.

31. Regarding enhancing the flow of resources, in the further initiatives adopted at the special session, the Assembly: urged developed countries to strive to fulfil, as soon as possible, the agreed target of earmarking 0.15 to 0.2 per cent of GNP as ODA for the least developed countries; encouraged creditor countries to implement bilateral debt relief arrangements; stressed that debt relief should contribute to national development objectives, including poverty eradication; stated that priority should be accorded to the least developed countries in the allocation of resources on

concessional terms for economic and social development; encouraged the United Nations to enhance the provision of technical cooperation to these countries; and called for strengthened South-South cooperation. At the special session, the Assembly went on to call upon donor Governments and international organizations to encourage investment in critical infrastructure services, including reconstruction in post-conflict and natural disaster situations, invited Governments in these countries to utilize infrastructure investments to promote employment and suggested that food-for-work activities in low-income food-deficit countries could be strengthened.

32. To improve health care, the special session called for support and assistance for research and development centres in the field of vaccines, medicine and public health, thereby strengthening training of medical personnel and counsellors, improving control and treatment of communicable and infectious diseases and assisting in making vaccines and medicines widely available at affordable prices. It called for greater support to African Governments in expanding and strengthening programmes related to young people and HIV/AIDS, in the provision of key services linked to social security, care and support, prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, reduction of mother-to-child transmission, access to voluntary and confidential counselling and testing and support of behavioural change and responsible sexual behaviour.

C. World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

33. The World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance was held at Durban, South Africa, from 31 August to 8 September 2001.¹¹ The Conference adopted the Durban Declaration,¹² which affirmed

“that all peoples and individuals constitute one human family, rich in diversity. They have contributed to the progress of civilizations and cultures that form the common heritage of humanity. Preservation and promotion of tolerance, pluralism and respect for diversity can produce more inclusive societies”.

The Declaration and the Programme of Action¹² provided Governments, international, regional and

national agencies and organizations and all others concerned with a comprehensive approach to combating discrimination and other hurtful practices that threaten solidarity and social integration.

34. The outcome of the World Conference serves to promote the notion of social integration. One of the most far-reaching achievements of the World Summit for Social Development was to introduce this notion into international policy discourse. At Copenhagen, social integration was understood as the aim of creating “a society for all”, in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play. Social integration was not the attempt to make people adjust to society, but rather the attempt to make society accept all people. The aim was to foster social cohesion while recognizing and protecting diversity.

35. The twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly recognized that social integration is a prerequisite for creating harmonious, peaceful and inclusive societies, a concept which was also fundamental to the World Conference. While social integration cannot be universally defined, it is clear that promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, promotion of a culture of peace, tolerance and non-violence, respect for cultural and religious diversity, elimination of all forms of discrimination, assurance of equal opportunities for access to productive resources and participatory governance are important for social integration. Lack of access to education, the persistence of poverty and unemployment and inequitable access to opportunities and resources can cause social exclusion and marginalization. A growing number of people are afflicted by poverty because of inequitable distribution of opportunities, resources, income and access to employment and social services. This may be the result of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion or other factors. In addition, owing to continued gender-based discrimination and exclusion in many places, women and girls face particular disadvantages.

D. International Conference on Financing for Development

36. The International Conference on Financing for Development was held at Monterrey from 18 to 22 March 2002.¹³ The outcome document, known as the Monterrey Consensus,¹⁴ provides a picture of the new global approach to financing development. The

International Conference provided an opportunity for Governments, civil society, the business community and institutional stakeholders to exchange views on global economic issues. According to the Consensus, the response to the challenge of financing for development involves:

“Mobilizing and increasing the effective use of financial resources and achieving the national and international economic conditions needed to fulfil internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, to eliminate poverty, improve social conditions and raise living standards, and protect our environment, will be our first step in ensuring that the twenty-first century becomes the century of development for all”.

37. Financing for development involves more than identifying and mobilizing the necessary resources. It encompasses the entire range of economic issues and activities that affect development. It is a fundamental aspect of the enabling environment for development. The World Summit for Social Development initiated the idea of an enabling environment for social development. It recognized this environment as both economic and political in nature and called for its promotion at both national and international levels. While Governments are primarily responsible for promoting development, many will face difficulties unless there are concerted efforts at the international level to establish a supportive environment. The World Summit recognized that, in order to encourage economic growth and social development in all countries, it was important to promote free trade and increased access to markets, increased financial flows and investment and debt relief. Emphasis was also placed on developing mechanisms at the national level to ensure the benefits of growth were distributed equitably and that people had the opportunity to participate in important decisions. The social impact of these fundamental political and economic issues has been recognized. The twenty-fourth special session gave priority not just to efforts to mobilize financial resources but also to the need to integrate social and economic policies.

38. The twenty-fourth special session also drew attention to ensuring adequate financial resources for social development, recognizing that the mobilization of domestic and international resources is essential for achieving the commitments made in the Copenhagen

Declaration. Recently, increased attention has been paid to the need to utilize resources effectively and efficiently. Many countries suffer from insufficient revenue generation and collection, which jeopardize their ability to finance social services and social protection systems and leaves them unable to invest in human resource development or to face the challenges posed by demographic changes, population shifts and ageing societies.

39. The twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly called for the conducting of a rigorous analysis of the advantages, disadvantages and other implications of proposals for developing new and innovative sources of funding, both public and private, for dedication to social development and poverty eradication programmes. The Monterrey Consensus further elaborated this call, stating,

“We recognize the value of exploring innovative sources of finance provided that those sources do not unduly burden developing countries. In that regard, we agree to study, in the appropriate forums, the results of the analysis requested from the Secretary-General on possible innovative sources of finance, noting the proposal to use special drawing rights allocations for development purposes”.

40. The special session also called for instituting systems to assess and monitor the social impact of macroeconomic policies, particularly in response to financial crises and in the design of reform programmes, as well as for developing national and regional guidelines to assess the social and economic cost of unemployment and poverty based on broad definitions of efficiency and productivity.

E. Second World Assembly on Ageing

41. The Second World Assembly on Ageing was held at Madrid from 8 to 12 April 2002.¹⁵ The World Assembly promoted international discourse in the field of ageing and expanded the concept of social integration defined at the World Summit for Social Development, in particular in its focus on special social needs, by promoting the concept of a “society for all ages”. The Assembly thus further refined the Summit’s commitments and initiatives in the context of older persons.

42. At the Second World Assembly, Governments set out the blueprint for an international response to the opportunities and challenges presented by population ageing in the twenty-first century. A Political Declaration and the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002 were adopted.¹⁶ These documents echo many of the goals and elements contained in the outcomes of the World Summit and the twenty-fourth special session. The Plan of Action provides policy makers with concrete recommendations in three main priority areas: older persons and development; advancing health and well-being into old age; and ensuring enabling and supportive environments.

43. Since demographic changes are expected to be the greatest and most rapid in developing countries, where the population of older persons is expected to quadruple by 2050, the World Assembly recognized the importance of placing ageing in the context of strategies for poverty eradication, as well as efforts to achieve full participation of all developing countries in the world economy. The outcome promotes recognition that ageing is not simply an issue of social security and welfare but of overall development and economic policy as well as a positive approach to ageing and the need to overcome the negative stereotypes associated with it. The Assembly expressed its commitment to the promotion of healthy lifestyles, access to services, investment in social services and ensuring the right of older persons to continue working, should they choose to do so. Emphasis was also placed on the impact of HIV/AIDS on older persons and the enormous contributions they make, particularly in taking care of grandchildren orphaned by the disease.

44. Governments have primary responsibility for implementing the International Plan of Action, in partnership with civil society, the private sector and older persons. International cooperation is essential. National and international follow-up measures should start with mainstreaming issues and concerns of older persons into national development frameworks. Research and technology should be directed at the individual, social and health implications of ageing, particularly in developing countries.

F. World Summit on Sustainable Development

45. The World Summit on Sustainable Development will be held at Johannesburg from 26 August to 4 September 2002. The Summit will evaluate the obstacles to progress and the results achieved since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992,¹⁷ at which Agenda 21 was adopted.¹⁸ The Johannesburg Summit will focus on turning plans into action and will present an opportunity to build on the knowledge gained during the past decade. It thus provides new impetus for commitment of resources and specific action towards achieving global sustainable development.

46. Sustainable development requires integrated action in three areas: economic growth and equity; conserving natural resources and the environment; and social development. Agenda 21 integrated these concerns into a single policy framework. Its proposals and recommendations for action have been expanded and strengthened at other major United Nations conferences and summits, in particular the World Summit for Social Development, which called for promotion of people-centred sustainable development as the overall goal of national and international action, and the Millennium Summit.

47. The outcome of the World Summit for Social Development built on the foundation established at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development when it adopted Agenda 21. The five-year review process of both the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (in 1997) and the World Summit for Social Development (in 2000) provided recommendations for further action. The Johannesburg Summit provides a new opportunity for the discussion of universal issues and concerns in the light of changing circumstances. Among these issues are: eradicating poverty; addressing the challenges of globalization; promoting responsible production and consumption patterns; ensuring access to sources of energy; reducing environment-related health problems; and improving access to clean water. Following upon all the major United Nations conferences and summits, the Johannesburg Summit marks the next step in the continuing evolution of the international agenda for sustained and sustainable economic and social development.

IV. Contributions of the United Nations system

48. The United Nations system has continued to develop and implement programmes and activities to achieve the goals of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session. Many of these activities were summarized in the previous report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on this subject.¹⁹ Recently, a number of organizations and specialized agencies contributed their views on the priority theme of the Commission for Social Development at its fortieth session, "Integration of social and economic policy". The contributing organizations and agencies were the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Those contributions were summarized by the Secretary-General in his report to the Commission for Social Development.²⁰

V. Activities of the Division for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs

A. International Forum for Social Development

49. The International Forum for Social Development, a project of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, is an effort to promote implementation of the outcomes of recent conferences and summits, in particular the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session. The Forum brings together individuals from Governments, international organizations, the private sector and civil society for a dialogue on global development and social progress. Using the theme "Open Societies, Open Economies: Challenges and Opportunities", the

Forum aims to contribute to shaping and orienting the debate on globalization and promoting a more inclusive and equitable global society. A main objective of the Forum is to assist developing countries in implementing their social development objectives and participating in the globalization process. Improving the possibilities for all countries to participate in determining the contours and the processes of globalization should help to render it more democratic, more concerned with the pursuit of the common good and more amenable to achieving development objectives.

50. The first International Forum for Social Development was held in New York on 7 and 8 February 2002. Forty-three participants took part in discussions on "Financing global social development". Among the issues discussed were: the rationale for an international/global financing of social development; whether globalization could be favourable to the financing of social development; and what should be the contours of the financing of social development.

51. After the conclusion of the Forum, its coordinator presented some of the major points discussed before the Commission for Social Development. The financing of social development had become more problematic in recent years, in both developing and developed countries. Governments have had fewer resources for distributive or redistributive measures with a social intent, in spite of the fact that the world has never been richer. The explanation lies in political choices, in the determination of priorities in the distribution and allocation of resources between the public and private sectors. Another issue was the rise of individual freedom and autonomy as both a driving force and a result of globalization. This individualism was part of a historical movement; it was the foundation of the market economy system and one of the conditions for social development. There was concern, however, that this freedom could be expressed in negative ways and result in excessive concentrations of economic, financial and political power. The importance of solidarity within and among societies should be recognized.

52. According to participants at the Forum, financing of social development required the reinforcement of traditional means and policies and the adoption of innovative measures. International financing of social development was a complement to national efforts. Yet, while a global contribution to the financing of social

development was necessary, the ultimate determination of social progress and well-being continued to rest at national and local levels, where people interface with institutions.

B. Youth Employment Network

53. The Secretary-General issued a report to the Millennium Summit entitled, "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century".²¹ Among its many proposals was a commitment to establish a Youth Employment Network. The Millennium Declaration also resolved to develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work.

54. A 12-member panel was created to guide the Youth Employment Network. Meeting for the first time in July 2001, the panel emphasized both immediate action and long-term commitment to achieving the goal on youth employment. The panel was expected to continue working in an advisory capacity. A joint secretariat, with support from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and ILO, provided initial support to the Network. ILO is expected to take the lead in organizing the future work of the Youth Employment Network and to host a permanent secretariat.

55. The panel developed a series of recommendations, implicit in which was the panel's view that youth is an asset, not a problem. Governments were invited to develop national action plans with targets for the creation of jobs and for the reduction of unemployment. In developing their plans, Governments were encouraged to involve young people closely and to integrate their actions for youth employment into a comprehensive employment policy.

56. The panel's recommendations avoided speaking of young people as tomorrow's leaders, but rather as today's partners. Young people ask that their voices be heard, that issues affecting them be addressed and that their roles be recognized. Rather than being viewed as a target group for which employment must be found, they want to be accepted as partners for development, helping to chart a common course and shaping the future for everyone.

57. The panel proposed an approach focusing on four "E"s:

- (a) Employability: investing in improved education and vocational training for young people;
- (b) Equal opportunities: providing young women with the same opportunities as young men;
- (c) Entrepreneurship: making it easier to start and run enterprises to provide more and better jobs for young women and men;
- (d) Employment creation: placing employment creation at the centre of macroeconomic policies.

C. Workshops and seminars

58. As part of its continuing effort to promote implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session, the Division for Social Policy and Development organized regional workshops for capacity-building and networking. Three workshops were organized during the past year: the subregional workshop for the Caribbean on implementation and follow-up to commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development, held at Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, from 26 to 30 November 2001; the workshop for strengthening the subregional network in Central America and the Caribbean for implementation and follow-up to the Social Summit Commitments, held at Havana, from 9 to 11 January 2002; and the follow-up meeting to the interregional workshop on networking and capacity-building for social development in north-east Asia, held in Beijing from 27 to 29 March 2002. Each meeting brought together representatives from Governments and organizations of civil society to discuss the recommendations and initiatives contained in the outcome documents in the context of national and regional circumstances. The goals of the meetings were to increase national capacities to implement policies and programmes for social development and to create and strengthen networks for exchanging experiences and sharing ideas and practices.

VI. Conclusion

59. Promotion of social development and implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session were encouraged through various activities during the past year. The core issues of the World Summit — the eradication of poverty, the promotion of productive employment and the enhancement of social integration — were largely incorporated in the agendas of most United Nations meetings, in government policies and programmes and in the work programmes of the United Nations system. Integration of social objectives in these spheres demonstrates a continuing firm commitment to achieving the goals of the World Summit, now largely incorporated in the development goals of the Millennium Declaration. **Achieving social development for all, however, requires more than fulfilling development goals, important as these are. Social progress and development also imply qualitative achievements, including increased participation, greater social justice and improved equity in societies, which must be promoted.**

Notes

- ¹ See A/51/348, A/52/305, A/53/211, A/54/211, A/54/220, A/55/344 and A/56/140.
- ² Resolution 55/2.
- ³ *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995* (UN publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.
- ⁴ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.01.IV.5.
- ⁵ Resolution 56/38, annex.
- ⁶ E/CN.5/2002/3.
- ⁷ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2002, Supplement No. 6* (E/2002/26), chap. I, sect. D, resolution 40/1, annex.
- ⁸ A/CONF.191/12.
- ⁹ A/CONF.191/11.
- ¹⁰ Resolution S-24/2, annex.
- ¹¹ A/CONF.189/12.
- ¹² *Ibid.* chap. I.

¹³ *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

¹⁵ A/CONF.197/9.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

¹⁷ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

¹⁹ A/56/140.

²⁰ E/CN.5/2002/3, annex IV.

²¹ A/54/2000.
