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**ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS**

**Report of the Second Social Forum  
(Geneva, 22-23 July 2004)**

**Chairman-Rapporteur: José Bengoa**

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## **Introduction**

1. In its resolution 2002/12, the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights requested the Commission on Human Rights to recommend to the Economic and Social Council that it authorize the Sub-Commission to convene in Geneva an annual intersessional forum on economic, social and cultural rights, to be known as the Social Forum, for two days on dates that would permit the possible participation of 10 members of the Sub-Commission, to be appointed by the regional groups of the Sub-Commission. The Commission, in its decision 2003/107, and the Council, in its decision 2003/264, endorsed the request of the Sub-Commission. At its fifty-fifth session, the Sub-Commission, in its resolution 2003/14, reiterated its decision that the Social Forum shall meet every year.

2. The 2004 edition of the Social Forum is the second of its kind. A preliminary session was held in 2001. The first Social Forum was held on 2 August 2002 (see E/CN.4/Sub.2/2002/18).

## **I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION**

3. The Social Forum was held on 22 and 23 July 2004. The following experts of the Sub-Commission participated: Gudmundur Alfredsson, José Bengoa, Gáspár Bíró, Shiqiu Chen, Christy Ezim Mbonu, Vladimir Kartashkin, Abdul Sattar.

4. The following experts of the Sub-Commission also attended the meeting: Soli Jehangir Sorabjee.

5. Representatives of the following States Members of the United Nations were represented by observers: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Chile, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Ecuador, Finland, France, Gabon, Germany, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, United States of America, Venezuela.

6. The following non-member State was represented: Holy See.

7. The following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies were represented: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), World Health Organization (WHO), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

8. The following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council were represented: Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO),

Europe-Third World Centre, Franciscans International, International Council of Women, International Movement ATD Fourth World, World Muslim Congress (general); Baha'i International Community, European Roma Rights Center, Femmes Africa Solidarité, International Association of Democratic Lawyers, International Council of Jewish Women, International Federation of Human Rights Leagues, International Federation of Social Workers, International Federation of University Women, International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples, International Movement for Fraternal Union Among Races and Peoples, International Movement of Apostolate in the Independent Social Milieus, International Organization for the Development of Freedom of Education, International Service for Human Rights, Lutheran World Federation, Minbyun-Lawyers for a Democratic Society, New Humanity, Pax Romana, South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre, World Union of Catholic Women's Organization, Worldwide Organization for Women (special); International Educational Development, International Federation of Rural Adult Catholic Movements, Soka Gakkai International, World Peace Council (Roster).

9. The following organizations and academic institutions also sent representatives: Centre for Applied Studies in International Negotiations, Comité Exterior de Apoyo al Consejo Indio de Sud América, Fondation El Kef pour le développement, London School of Economics, Lucitrust - Bonne volonté mondiale, Ludwig Boltzmann Institute, Roman Catholic Church - North Wales, School for International Training, Ulster University.

10. The Social Forum was comprised of four panels, on "Poverty and human rights: empowerment of people living in poverty" (panel 1); "Rural poverty and extreme poverty: special groups" (panel 2); "The role of human rights in the development of operational strategies to address poverty" (panel 3); and "Recommendations on elements for incorporating human rights into poverty reduction strategies" (panel 4). Each panel discussion was led by experts. Questions and comments from Forum participants followed the presentations of the experts. The programme of the Social Forum is attached as annex I. A list of documents provided to the Social Forum is attached as annex II.

11. The experts and NGO representatives who participated in the three panels were: Patricia Achille, Chaloka Beyani, Leandro Despouy, Emilio Gavarrete, Paul Hunt, Jennifer Koinante, Manfred Nowak, Siddiq Osmani, Shahra Razavi, Phrang Roy and Kari Tapiola.

12. The United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights opened the Social Forum. He acknowledged Mr. Bengoa's role in moving the Social Forum forward, noting the relevance of the right to development in promoting the empowerment of human beings. He noted the relevance of the 1969 Declaration on Social Progress and Development to the Forum's work, along with the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, and the Millennium Declaration and associated Millennium Development Goals. Poverty eradication required commitment and action on both the international and national levels. The Deputy High Commissioner encouraged the Forum to reflect on the value added that it could bring to addressing these challenges and to contributing new elements to the debate.

13. Mr. Chen nominated Mr. Bengoa as Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Social Forum. The nomination was approved by acclamation.

14. Mr. Bengoa, taking the Chair, described the Forum's work as being like a cultural movement to eliminate poverty, or an abolitionist project, in line with an anti-slavery analogy. He encouraged anti-poverty efforts to move away from the assumption that poverty was a natural phenomenon, stressing instead that poverty was unacceptable from a human rights standpoint and should be met with indignation. "Poverty is the modern face of slavery", in Nelson Mandela's words. Mr. Bengoa reiterated the importance of finding synergies between efforts at the international and national levels, noting the 2004 Social Forum held in Mumbai, India, and recent anti-poverty colloquia in Pune, India, and Nantes, France, and their linkages to the broader international anti-poverty movement. Mr. Bengoa encouraged the experts, Governments and NGOs present to develop a clear understanding of the direction that the Social Forum should take, notably on the question of the definitions of poverty and extreme poverty and on the need for a separate normative instrument in this field. The Forum should build on the increasingly well-established linkages between poverty and violations of human rights, and bring to the Sub-Commission a clear idea of the kinds of projects and strategies it should be pursuing on these issues.

15. The provisional agenda (E/CN.4/Sub.2/SF/2004/1) was adopted, and rapporteurs nominated for the first three panels.

## **II. POVERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS: EMPOWERMENT OF PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY**

16. Mr. Tapiola, of the International Labour Organization (ILO), quoted the 1944 Philadelphia Declaration, noting that poverty anywhere constituted a danger to prosperity everywhere. It was a basic social and economic illness, incapacitating and marginalizing individuals, groups and countries. High degrees of inequality impeded economic growth. The world had become more polarized, with unequal distribution of benefits that were measured in narrow economic terms. A more prosperous and fair world would also be a more secure world. Employment creation must be a central pillar of national action, and the employment created must be "decent work", in broad conformity with international standards. For the poor, access to work was often the only way to get out and stay out of poverty. Governance mechanisms must better address the way that labour markets functioned. Inclusion, integration and income generation needed to be prioritized, and social inclusion must be brought more directly into macroeconomic policy. Growth that reduced poverty must be reoriented towards the poor and excluded groups.

17. The ILO has produced policy tools with which communities could work their way out of poverty. A "decent work toolkit" has been tested in 14 countries, one of the cornerstones of which was fostering community-driven initiatives. Mr. Tapiola highlighted the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work of 1998 ("core labour standards"), along with the 8 ILO conventions on this topic, describing them as a commonly accepted "floor" for the global economy. Further exploration was needed to determine how ILO instruments were directly relevant to poverty reduction, along with the role of the ILO standards supervisory process. If there was no respect for minimum rights relating to decent work, the road was open to apathy, extremism and a potentially devastating combination of the two.

18. Mr. Nowak spoke of the importance of civil and political rights in the fight against poverty. Empowerment was characterized as the very essence of human rights. The existence of claims and legal entitlements with corresponding legal obligations and duties, to which States and other duty-holders could be held accountable at national and international levels, distinguished the human rights idea of empowerment from that found in other frameworks and value systems. The ultimate goal of development was the eradication of poverty. However, the process of development was still driven by economic interests in industrialized countries, within an overarching paternalistic construct. The human rights approach to poverty reduction reflected a fundamentally different set of assumptions. "Powerlessness" was the underlying theme of the World Bank's *Voices of the Poor* study. Poverty reduction was commonly associated only with economic, social and cultural rights. But if poverty was properly understood as powerlessness, civil and political rights must be brought to the fore as well, so that the poor could organize themselves, demand their own rights and lift themselves out of poverty.

19. Mr. Nowak observed that the World Bank and other agencies rightly asked that poverty reduction strategies be country-driven, but the reality did not yet match the rhetoric. The poor themselves rarely played an active role in the design, formulation and implementation of poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) processes. The main challenge for implementing a human rights approach was to ensure that the poor participated in an active and informed manner at all phases of the process, including in monitoring and accountability processes. A successful policy of poverty reduction could only be implemented in societies where civil and political rights were fully guaranteed, and where there was equal protection of the law for all groups, including the poor, as well as equal participation.

20. Mr. Osmani spoke on the relationship between empowerment and poverty reduction. The *Voices of the Poor* study brought out the pervasive sense of powerlessness - rather than hunger, illiteracy and related incapacities alone - experienced by the poor. Powerlessness was an aspect of poverty, as well as a cause and consequence. Being a cause of poverty, powerlessness must be addressed directly in strategies to reduce poverty. Few if any policies were neutral in terms of their impacts on different sections of society. Policy choices concerning resource allocation, governance structures and so forth implied that policy makers were giving benefits to certain sections of society to the exclusion of others. The powerlessness of the poor precluded their participation and influence in political processes. Political processes of decision-making needed to be altered to reflect the interests of the poor. That was why empowerment was essential for poverty reduction.

21. As to what could be done, Mr. Osmani highlighted the importance of social mobilization. Local organization could be a potent force, owing to the sheer numbers of the poor. But poverty was a barrier to spontaneous self-organization. External agents were often needed as catalysts and mobilizers. However, the poor often had a sense of diffidence or fear, born from living under the domination of the rich, with associated economic insecurity. Programmes were necessary to provide alternative economic livelihood components to provide for minimum economic security, as a prerequisite to effective social mobilization. A further necessary element was a guarantee of civil and political freedoms, including access to justice and the rule of law, and the right to information.

22. The Deputy High Commissioner welcomed the presentations and again encouraged participants to identify new elements, noting the extensive work produced under the auspices of the Sub-Commission, the Commission on Human Rights, and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, among others. He asked what could be added to the work of those bodies, and what the Social Forum could add that was new. He suggested that the idea of “preventable poverty” might be worth considering, along with a number of specific proposals, namely (a) encouraging States to report periodically on the extent of extreme poverty in their country, with national human rights institutions identifying in their annual reports situations of preventable poverty, which in most situations could be addressed within existing resources; (b) a more active role for courts and international human rights bodies in responding to consistent patterns of gross violations of economic, social and cultural rights; (c) highlighting the principle of non-discrimination - an immediate rather than progressively realizable obligation - in poverty reduction efforts; (d) a greater emphasis on the general comments and recommendations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; (e) reliance upon the Secretary-General’s five-year assessments of progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals; and (f) a greater emphasis on preventive strategies nationally, regionally, and internationally.

23. The Chairperson then opened the floor for comments from the participants. Mr. Kartashkin argued that States that had not yet ratified or acceded to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights should be asked to report to the Social Forum on the obstacles to ratification or accession, and to identify areas where technical assistance from the United Nations could help. Legal and social mobilization approaches should go hand in hand.

24. Mr. Sattar noted variable progress in poverty reduction between different countries. He noted that successful countries had relied largely upon domestic effort, based on nationally relevant goals and strategies, on good governance characterized by a sense of purpose, sound economic policies, political systems and social structures. However, the international community had a role to play in promoting an enabling environment, in strengthening economic cooperation and promoting good governance. Corruption had been a significant barrier to economic development, facilitated to some extent by shortcomings in the international banking system. At the international level, the international economic order and trading system - including agricultural subsidies - were also serious barriers to be addressed. The Social Forum should urge the Sub-Commission, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly to facilitate the entry into force of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, and promote efforts to secure the success of the Doha round of World Trade Organization negotiations.

25. Mr. Despouy noted that extreme poverty was a widespread phenomenon, present in all countries, and was increasing despite technological progress. Yet there was no universally accepted definition of exactly what was meant by poverty, or extreme poverty. Lack of income was not sufficient. Poverty was now widely accepted as multidimensional in human rights terms, a vicious circle of non-realization of all human rights - economic, social, political, civil and cultural. Human rights solutions therefore needed to be holistic and multidimensional. Poverty, and extreme poverty in particular, were in great part invisible phenomena. Inquiries were needed at international and national levels to determine what these phenomena actually were, with clearly defined parameters with which to develop policies that would have a defined impact on poverty reduction.

26. Mr. Alfredsson highlighted respect for all human rights as the point of departure, noting also the need for prevention of violent conflict and the need to introduce stronger accountability of elected and appointed officials in government as part of good governance, as well as transparency, democracy and broad-based participation. Labour standards, intellectual property rights, human rights and development were significant, but Mr. Alfredsson expressed doubt whether the right to development would be a helpful focus. Other elements cited were mainstreaming of human rights in United Nations and other development agencies, and respect for minority rights and indigenous rights within the overall framework of prevention of violent conflict. Human rights were primarily the responsibility of States, with international forums and organizations and third States playing a subsidiary role. Guidelines were needed to regulate the direction to which aid was channelled at the national level, relying more on law and less on politics, invoking justiciable legal standards before courts and human rights bodies. Mr. Alfredsson noted the importance of the concept of “special measures”, or affirmative action, within the non-discrimination norm, as spelled out in existing international treaties.

27. The Chairperson then opened the floor for discussion. The Chairperson of CONGO welcomed the decision of the Economic and Social Council to make the Social Forum an annual event and she urged that further funding be obtained to ensure grass-roots participation in Social Forum debates. The poor must be involved in planning, implementation and monitoring of poverty reduction programmes. Human rights were revolutionary, because it meant “everybody”, a quintessentially bottom-up approach, challenging those with political power. Participatory democracy was needed in order to meet poor peoples’ demands.

28. Ms. Mbonu referred to a number of external constraints on national poverty reduction efforts, including trade subsidies, the external debt burden, and the diversion of aid on a large scale to private offshore bank accounts. Mr. Tapiola commented on subsidy systems, noting that temporary adjustment measures were in fact subsidies, but that economic transitions in both industrialized and developing countries required them to some degree. The challenge was to operate those subsidies within clearly defined periods, conditions and sunset clauses. Mr. Osmani agreed with the need to address those external constraints, but noted that many countries had shown an ability to make good progress even within that difficult international environment. The representative of CONGO noted the problem of a lack of a widely accepted definition of poverty. On this question, Mr. Nowak referred to a human rights-based definition of poverty built on Amartya Sen’s “capability approach” to poverty.

### **III. RURAL POVERTY AND EXTREME POVERTY: THE VOICE OF AFFECTED GROUPS**

29. Patricia Achille, of the International Movement ATD-Fourth World, presented a case study concerning opportunities and challenges for the empowerment of the poor in Mauritius. The World Day to Overcome Extreme Poverty (17 October) was an important event in Mauritius in terms of raising consciousness of poverty in the country. NGOs, Churches and other groups had used the World Day to Overcome Extreme Poverty to mobilize and enable those living in poverty to express themselves on their condition. Ms. Achille recounted the story of her support for one particular family over a number of years, to enable them to benefit from the Government’s land release programme. Claiming rights in that case was a time-consuming, but worthwhile, process for the family concerned. The World Day to Overcome Extreme Poverty had shown that people living in poverty could be active players in the quest for solutions. On the

definition of extreme poverty, Ms. Achille cited with approval the Sub-Commission's work on this, in paragraph 27 of the report submitted in 1996 by the Special Rapporteur on human rights and extreme poverty (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1996/13).

30. Emilio Gavarette, of Franciscans International, Honduras, spoke of the work of Franciscans International within certain indigenous communities in Honduras, where the incidence of poverty had reached 90 per cent. Franciscans International had lived with these communities for years, helping people to organize themselves. Considerable efforts were required to help those people rise above their low self-esteem and other legacies of exclusion. It was necessary to work hand in hand in that regard, tapping into the resources of the people and respecting their own histories. The land rights and other rights of the indigenous people under ILO Convention No. 169 need constantly to be reinforced. Poverty-induced migration to cities and neighbouring countries put people in situations of increased personal risk. Mr. Gavarette urged the Social Forum to recommend to the Sub-Commission that it should continue its work on recommendations for measures needed for the full realization of human rights and effective justice. He argued that the elaboration of an international instrument on extreme poverty and human rights was necessary in order to provide a basis for legal recourse.

31. Jennifer Koinante, a member of a Maasai pastoralist group in Kenya, is an Indigenous Fellow with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. She spoke on behalf of the five participants in the Indigenous Fellow programme. The right to adequate housing, food, education, health care, political participation, and involvement in policy-making were highlighted as rights most frequently denied to indigenous people. The pastoralist way of living, and that of hunter-gatherers, were perceived as unproductive and even destructive to the environment. Ms. Koinante made a number of recommendations, including the establishment of an international commission of pastoralists and hunter-gatherers to identify solutions, the recognition at national and international levels of the pastoral way of life, more widespread acceptance by financial institutions of livestock as collateral, provision of medical and market services, the development of a policy on food security for pastoralist and hunter areas, sensitization of the media, greater involvement of indigenous women in policy-making, and the establishment of laws recognizing traditional rangeland management and use. Actions need to be grounded in the provisions of the seven core human rights conventions.

32. Chaloka Beyani, of the London School of Economics, spoke on the links between rural poverty, extreme poverty, and civil and political rights violations. The poor were often vulnerable to problems of spiritual indoctrination, abandoning hope. Physical and economic exploitation of the poor was widespread. Mr. Beyani stated that poverty - whether rural or extreme - violated human rights and constituted inhuman and degrading treatment. The State must prevent the arbitrary deprivation of life, and must provide redress for deaths arising from poverty. Violations also frequently took place under patriarchal land tenure systems. Consensus was needed at the national level on how resources such as mineral and oil wealth should be distributed, to mitigate the potential for violent conflict. A particular focus was needed on minorities, indigenous peoples and the rights of non-citizens. Good governance was needed to prevent and alleviate poverty and to provide redress. Stronger accountability for the elimination of corruption was needed. Human rights provided a basis for galvanizing international poverty reduction efforts. The OHCHR draft guidelines on a human rights approach to poverty reduction strategies could be set within an international instrument, providing stronger legal foundations for that effort.

33. Paul Hunt, Special Rapporteur on the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, acknowledged the groundbreaking work of the Sub-Commission on the subject of human rights and extreme poverty. Mr. Hunt stated that human rights did not provide all the answers to poverty reduction, but rather was one significant element in a multidimensional programme for social change. Mr. Hunt observed that assimilationist policies could be destructive of indigenous peoples. The human rights principle of non-discrimination must be better reflected in State policies and practices, tailored to fit indigenous peoples' cultures rather than the other way around. Ninety per cent of the world's research budget on health issues was spent on diseases afflicting only 10 per cent of the world's population, a situation that needed to be addressed. People living in poverty needed space to express their own realities. The human rights framework - freedoms of expression and assembly - could help expand space for dialogue. Other "added values" of human rights included the requirement for international cooperation, as reflected in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The main practical challenge now was to identify new tools and techniques to operationalize a human rights approach to poverty reduction, a quintessentially contextual challenge. The human rights community needed to work closely in that regard with economists, trade specialists, health and education workers, and those living in extreme poverty.

34. The Chairperson opened the floor for discussion. Mr. Gáspár Bíró welcomed the presentations and identified consensus on the primary importance of national level efforts in preventing poverty. The representative of Chile commended the Chairperson and the Social Forum for the initiative. He observed that different approaches might be needed depending upon whether the Social Forum addressed poverty or extreme poverty, and outlined a number of policy measures introduced in Chile ("Chile in solidarity") to ensure economic growth with equity. A human rights approach was appropriate to combating extreme poverty on the basis of existing international instruments. Ideological approaches - putting economic and social rights within a subsidiary category - needed to be kept in check, and the "progressive realization" obligation applied with legal rigour, not extended to immediate obligations such as the non-discrimination obligation. Guidelines on human rights and poverty reduction could be helpful, tailored to the particularities of diverse situations.

35. The representative from Pax Romana noted that article 14 of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women is the only international human rights instrument dealing specifically with rural poverty, and recommended that its relevance be explored further for the benefit of the Sub-Commission. More offensive techniques are needed at the level of global governance as well as the national level, as poverty makes all international norms inoperative. India is a case where the rural poor succeeded in mobilizing to elect a Government perceived to better reflect their concerns.

36. Mr. Volodine, of UNESCO, underlined that UNESCO attached great importance to the struggle against poverty, which was a denial of human dignity and a violation of human rights. UNESCO was currently elaborating its strategy in that field and planned to concentrate on research and analysis of the multidimensional nature of poverty and extreme poverty; promotion and poverty review processes at national level to engage Governments, civil society and the poor in examining dimensions of poverty within the country and in mobilizing to fight poverty; and contributing to capacity-building and strategic advocacy initiatives to bring about poverty

eradication reforms. He supported standard-setting efforts and proposals to define “extreme poverty” and “poverty”, including for the purpose of facilitating evaluations of progress.

37. Mr. Alfredsson said that attention should be given to increased ratification of and accession to the human rights treaties and to acceptance and greater use of individual complaints procedure. Legal aid services should be made more widely available and accessible for minority, indigenous and tribal groups. The Commission and the Sub-Commission should be encouraged to support these goals. But Mr. Alfredsson did not agree that a definition of poverty was required, or would be instrumental for substantive progress on poverty eradication. Mr. Chen expressed the view that greater emphasis should be placed on practical challenges, rather than the definition of poverty itself. But he agreed that poverty should be looked at from the point of view of human rights, and that a multidimensional view of poverty was critical. Economic rights, including education, should be prioritized, along with the responsibilities of industrialized countries in poverty reduction.

38. The representative of the International Movement ATD-Fourth World emphasized the importance of distinguishing between poverty and extreme poverty, and expressed the view that definition of these terms would help to target remedial efforts aimed at the poorest. Several national and international institutions used the definition proposed by Mr. Despouy in his report to the Sub-Commission on human rights and extreme poverty (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1996/13).

39. The representative of Peru highlighted the importance of bringing the wisdom of the rural poor to those involved in the World Trade Organization and other economic negotiations. Mr. Bengoa agreed that the topic of agricultural subsidies was important, and suggested that norms or standards in the area of human rights and poverty reduction should explicitly take this into account. A representative of the International Federation of Social Workers emphasized that reaching the poorest people required facilitation at all levels. Governments could not do everything and needed partners from all sectors, helping the poorest gain the physical and emotional capacity and self-confidence needed to lift themselves out of their condition. Small grants and education were important pillars for that effort, along with infrastructure to bridge the digital divide.

40. Ms. Mbonu cautioned against spending too much energy on definitional debates. The requirements of good governance and the rule of law were known, but practical challenges remained. Mr. Gavarette stressed that it was important to emphasize the proper supervision of international assistance programmes to ensure that the benefits went where they were intended to go. Mr. Beyani referred to the definition of poverty of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which he suggested could be regarded as authoritative.

#### **IV. HUMAN RIGHTS IN OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS POVERTY**

41. Phrang Roy, of the International Fund for Agricultural Development, spoke of his organization’s experiences in poverty reduction, working in rural areas where most of the poor were to be found. Participatory rural appraisals guided all IFAD projects. To the poor, political and economic rights were very much intertwined. The right to food, interpreted as an enforceable claim to food of sufficient quantity and quality, played a significant role. Growth did not trickle down to the poorest segments of society in rural areas. In such situations, the

right to food called for economic and social policies that paid special attention to the poorest and most marginalized. Mr. Roy emphasized the call for socio-political empowerment of the poor, implying developing and strengthening organizations of the poor to confront the issues they defined as critical, and expanding the influence that the poor exerted over public policy and institutions. Separate women's groups were needed to develop the capabilities and assets of women.

42. Mr. Roy referred to the IFAD rights-based programming, adopted recently in a project in Nepal, addressing the high level of discrimination against women and indigenous peoples there. The process involved: (a) sensitization on human rights issues; (b) offering financial incentives to communities that met the social objectives of inclusion; (c) promoting awareness of constitutional rights; (d) promoting policy dialogue and advocacy through reporting of violations, training of rights-holders and of the judiciary, policy reviews and dialogue; and (e) instituting a legal fund to assist beneficiaries in legal matters. That approach would be replicated in other countries. If the Millennium Development Goals were to be implemented by 2015, a rights-based approach to development must become one of the distinctive features of a pro-poor strategy.

43. Mr. Despouy addressed the link between the right to access to justice and extreme poverty. Extreme poverty was a violation of economic, social, civil, political and cultural rights. The lack of a definition of extreme poverty made it hard to address the human rights dimensions of that phenomenon. Solidarity associations played a critical role in defending the rights of the poor. The problem of impunity needed to be addressed. Frequently the stigmatization attached to poverty resulted in the denial of the essential humanity of groups of people, much like the effects of apartheid and slavery. Apartheid was fought by the United Nations, resulting in condemnation of the perpetrators and abolition of the phenomenon. However extreme poverty had tended to be overlooked. That brought to the fore the human rights dimensions of the problem.

44. On the question of definition, Mr. Despouy noted that the Sub-Commission had not so far succeeded in defining either poverty or extreme poverty. However, a number of criteria had been identified for inclusion in a future definition, even if it was not embodied in an official document of the United Nations. Living in extreme poverty was a cumulative phenomenon of living in precarious conditions, involving a denial of access to the enjoyment of their rights. The persistence of insecurity over a long period was an important characteristic. All human rights were implicated and the response must be comprehensive, involving the participation of both the poor and the wealthy. Macroeconomic structures perpetuating poverty needed to be addressed from a human rights perspective. A genuine, rather than ideological, debate was called for.

45. Shahra Razavi, of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, spoke on the gender dimensions of economic policy, land tenure reforms, and on women's access to productive assets as part of strategies to reduce poverty. Micro-level progress was rendered difficult when the macro-environment was so disabling. Women's rights advocates had successfully contested the notion of the household as a unitary, private and patriarchal idea. But translating moral and legal gains into substantive entitlements that lifted women out of poverty was constrained by three factors: (a) a pro-market property rights regime being pushed heavily

by global institutions; (b) a combination of the erosion of government support for subsidized agriculture, making small farms unviable, and the opening up of countries to trade liberalization and competitive disadvantage owing to subsidy regimes elsewhere; and (c) the decentralization of the State and the emphasis on the “local” level, village councils and so forth.

46. As to (a) above, in private property regimes, resource-constrained women often lost the few rights that they had originally enjoyed. Markets had so far not delivered justice or equitable access to resources. Intra-household gains for women had been lost; households and communities lost overall to property investors who benefited from liberalized property rights regimes. As to (c), decentralization was being pushed by a range of actors for a range of reasons, including the promise of better justice. However, there was a serious risk of “elite capture” at local level (defined as the capture by local elites of local governments) and the rise of traditional systems of justice, working against the rights of poor women and other marginalized groups. Land allocation at the local level had frequently not worked to the advantage of women. Further empirical investigation was needed on how distributive justice operated at the local level. Finally, research was showing that wage work on large-scale farms could provide more reliable income and a surer way out of poverty than small-scale farming, calling into question microcredit schemes and land redistribution encouraging people to “pull themselves up by their bootstraps”. Employment was missed as an issue in the Millennium Development Goals, but needed to be brought to the fore in the context of macroeconomic discussions. The PRSP process had pre-empted adequate analysis and critique of the dominant macroeconomic prescriptions.

47. Mr. Osmani spoke of the need to define key terms, such as poverty. It was not enough to “know poverty when you see it”. Without objective criteria, one cannot measure progress, nor articulate strategies to reduce poverty. The OHCHR Conceptual Framework on Human Rights and Poverty Reduction offered a definition that linked with the human rights perspective, taking as a starting point Amartya Sen’s capability concept of poverty. From a capability perspective, poverty was the same thing as non-realization of human rights, and poverty reduction should aim at the realization of human rights.

48. Mr. Osmani divided his discussion of operational strategies into three parts: (a) the process of strategy formulation; (b) content of strategies; and (c) monitoring and implementation. Human rights considerations must bear on all three stages in a substantial and fundamental way. Mr. Osmani focused principally on the national dimension, without denying the importance of the international dimension. As to (a), the process of policy formulation must be genuinely participatory in nature, not just for reasons of efficiency and equity, but because people had a right to participate. Proper long-standing institutions needed to be established, rather than relying on ad hoc meetings or consultations. The concept of the “progressive realization” of economic, social and cultural rights was also discussed, and its limits identified. The non-discrimination obligation, for example, was an immediate obligation. For progressively realizable rights, duty-bearers must be able to show that they were doing their best in the given circumstances, and that progress was monitored objectively and through a participatory process, on the basis of appropriate indicators and benchmarks.

49. As to the content of poverty reduction strategies, the first task was prioritization: identifying which rights were lagging compared with others. Human rights guided policy trade-offs by identifying norms - moral imperatives underpinned by law - that could not be transgressed. On monitoring and implementation, the human rights perspective required duty-bearers to be held accountable for their successes or failures. Penalizing, reprimands, public exposure, electoral accountability and similar processes needed to be factored in as an essential element in monitoring poverty reduction strategies, in addition to redress for human rights violations.

50. The Chairperson opened the floor for discussion. The representative of Angola questioned the nature of the relationship between poverty and human rights, arguing that human rights could to some extent be a relative concept. The representative of Costa Rica, referring to Mr. Roy's presentation, noted that poverty was not a phenomenon related to income alone. States should give priority to providing a universal basic services platform, for health and education in particular. Moreover a multisectoral approach to public policy-making was called for, involving not only human rights institutions and actors but also ministries of trade, finance and so forth, so that all policies were assessed from a human rights perspective. Accountability was the key, and the participation of all stakeholders in policy dialogues.

51. Mr. Biró asked that the Forum distinguish between a descriptive, or functional, as opposed to a normative, definition of poverty. The latter definition was the more challenging enterprise, likely to reflect considerable limitations. The representative of Brazil spoke of the high incidence of poverty in her country. Brazil applied the concept of social inclusion in its development policies, and had prioritized the fight against hunger with an emphasis on non-discrimination and promoting access to justice. Human security and the problem of crime could not be considered independently of poverty. The representative of the World Bank perceived dangers in the over-simplification of allegations frequently levelled against the Bank. He spoke of the market mechanisms regulating access to property rights, and referred to Hernando de Soto's endorsement of the World Bank's projects in Central America in this regard. In his view, from the perspective of the poor, subsidy regimes were incompatible with investment. He also referred to the importance of the Bank's work on poverty and social impact assessment.

52. Ms. Mbonu expressed the view that Governments were frequently bad economic managers, hence liberalization - if undertaken properly - should not be regarded as an obstacle per se. She urged the Social Forum to include poor people, in addition to NGOs, directly in the Forum's deliberations. An indigenous people's representative referred to Mr. Despouy's reports on extreme poverty, highlighting the fact that illiteracy and education were frequently overlooked in economic analyses of poverty. In the opinion of the speaker, the inequitable distribution of resources was a result of laissez-faire economics and market-driven economic reforms. International financial institutions had not exhibited sufficient concern for human rights and social justice.

53. The representative of Pax Romana noted that the Secretary-General had published an opinion piece comparing poverty to an overlooked weapon of mass destruction. He requested a report on extreme poverty as a threat to peace, which should be factored into the Social Forum's

deliberations. He also urged that the rights of farmers and forest dwellers be explicitly recognized as human rights and that attention be given to protecting human rights defenders, as economic and social rights awareness increased. Finally, he referred to the large number of suicides among farmers in Andhra Pradesh, India, owing to the reduction of agricultural subsidies that had previously supported their livelihoods. Bilateral agreements as much as multilateral trade negotiations were causing these human losses, especially insofar as agricultural commodities were concerned. This had nothing to do with productivity in developing countries. He recommended that the Sub-Commission should get more involved in the problems of rural women and farmers.

54. The representative of the International Movement ATD-Fourth World recommended that the participation of and partnerships with poor people be strengthened, taking into account the OHCHR Draft Guidelines on a Human Rights Approach to Poverty Reduction. The representative of Chile noted that at the international level Governments should be consistent when negotiating at the WTO and when proclaiming adherence to human rights. Developing countries had only limited influence with the international financial institutions.

55. The Chairperson then gave the floor to the panellists to respond. Mr. Roy confirmed the risk of “elite capture” in the context of decentralization. He pointed to the need to support a coalition of the poor, reinforcing their social capital through capacity-building as a way to provide incentives against abuse. Mr. Despouy agreed with the idea that international financial institutions should develop new policies that took greater account of their impact on the poor. Additional efforts to reach the poor and describe their situation were needed. All treaty bodies should deal with poverty issues since all human rights were affected by poverty and existing standards could provide guidance. The need for a definition remained imperative, as well as a distinction between poverty and extreme poverty. Past work at the Sub-Commission, including the criteria agreed upon to identify poverty and its impact on human rights, should not be ignored. The global dimension of poverty was another important element as it was linked to international security.

56. Ms. Razavi underlined the need to bring inequality and solidarity back into the discussion on poverty, as well as the obligation to share and redistribute wealth through taxation systems. Human rights were meaningless if States were so weak that they could not be held accountable; the rehabilitation of the State was thus not just an issue of regulating the economy. Ultimately, all economic success stories relied on strong States and subsidies, at least for a while, to build up national capacities. Mr. Osmani clarified the notion of right to participate, which could not be questioned solely because of the frequent failure of elected officials to represent the interests of the poor; participation was imperative and the system had to be improved. Furthermore, subsidies could not be discussed too broadly as there were cases where their elimination was indeed justified; they were costly and did not benefit the poor, while in other cases well-targeted subsidies did make life easier for the poor.

## **V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**57. The following are the conclusions of each of the three thematic meetings of the Social Forum, followed by recommendations addressed to the Sub-Commission.**

### **A. Conclusions**

#### **Poverty and human rights: empowerment of people living in poverty**

**58. Despite successes in particular cases, there are millions of poor people in all regions of the world, with many living in extreme poverty, a condition that is anything but natural. Inequalities and the gaps between rich and poor are growing and constitute a threat to peace at the community, national and international levels. Awareness of the situation is not matched by a worldwide mobilization against poverty that should replicate the struggles to abolish slavery or apartheid.**

**59. Participants agreed that poverty and extreme poverty were cumulative and multidimensional violations of human dignity and human rights. A human rights approach was the only way to deal with it adequately as it helped identify duty-bearers - national Governments foremost and the international community second - that could be held accountable for their efforts towards eradicating poverty.**

**60. The international human rights framework, including general comments of the treaty monitoring bodies and the commitments made in the Millennium Declaration, were relevant to the description and definition of poverty as well as to the design of policies to eradicate it.**

**61. Several participants stressed the importance of the principle of the progressive realization of certain rights, especially economic, social and cultural rights. But that was not to be understood as an excuse for inaction, nor should progress in the realization of one right take place at the expense of the level of enjoyment of others, as stressed by the principle of non-retrogression which set limits to policy trade-offs. In addition, some rights generate obligations of immediate implementation (for instance, the prohibition against discrimination).**

**62. Poverty entailed powerlessness. The indivisibility of human rights called for a holistic approach to enable the poor to become active in social, economic and political life. Empowerment would allow them to exert, in a meaningful and informed way, their right to participation in the decision-making process at the community and national levels. Poverty could not be tackled by top-down, paternalistic assistance, but rather by turning the poor into a legitimate interest group that could participate in, and contest, resource-allocation decisions and other policies.**

**63. Poverty had many causes at the international and national levels. There were numerous international-level obstacles to national efforts to eradicate poverty. On the other hand, poverty was aggravated, if not bred, by bad governance. The interconnected issues of lack of access to justice, poor administration of justice and widespread corruption**

were major obstacles at the national level. Sustainable and equitable growth and development required that the institutional framework include mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability of officials.

64. The highest possible levels of employment and an environment that facilitated job creation would allow all those who were able to work to stay out of poverty without relying on assistance and welfare. Ratifying and implementing the ILO core labour standards would help to ensure that decent work was available, and that labour was not treated exclusively as a commodity. Special measures, or affirmative action mechanisms, were necessary to ensure that the benefits of growth were distributed to all.

65. National ownership of poverty eradication strategies did not preclude the duty of international solidarity, as reflected in the Millennium Declaration, international human rights instruments (notably the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child) and the Declaration on the Right to Development. While great progress in poverty eradication had been achieved in many countries within limited resources and with difficult external constraints, the negative impact of trade regimes and debt liabilities hampered overall progress.

#### **Rural poverty**

66. The characteristics of poverty differed between urban and rural settings. In the latter case agricultural labourers, small farmers, fisherfolk, forest-dwellers and pastoralists might be equally poor, but they often had different and, at times, conflicting interests regarding access to resources and land use. Indigenous peoples and minorities, refugees and internally displaced persons deserved special attention to counter patterns of discrimination leading to social exclusion and poverty. The human rights approach increased the effectiveness of poverty eradication policies; it required disaggregated data concerning the poorest and action to be based upon binding legal obligations for the fulfilment of all human rights.

67. The livelihood of the rural poor could be secured by granting them access to assets and protecting their traditional rights over natural resources. Land titling and mechanisms to reduce fluctuations of international commodity prices should be supported at national and international levels.

68. Mass migration from rural to urban areas, and to foreign countries, could be an opportunity, but also placed migrants in situations of aggravated personal risk, exposing them to exploitation, trafficking, or contemporary forms of slavery. Non-citizens, particularly poor migrants, were entitled to enjoy all their human rights on a non-discriminatory basis.

69. Poverty bred feelings of powerlessness. This was aggravated by stigmatization, fuelling low self-esteem and feelings of fatalism. The World Day to Overcome Extreme Poverty (17 October) offered an opportunity for mobilizing at national and international levels. Solutions should be sought from the perspective of the poor and they should be involved in designing measures, thereby moving from coping strategies to poverty eradication.

70. Participants argued for the need to define the terms “poverty” and “extreme poverty” and to distinguish between them, and there was agreement on the paramount importance of eradicating extreme poverty. The multidimensional character of poverty was noted, along with the limitations of income-based definitions of poverty. References were made to definitions reflected in the reports of the former Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on human rights and extreme poverty (1996), to Amartya Sen’s “capability approach”, adopted in *Human Rights and Poverty Reduction: A Conceptual Framework* and the draft guidelines on a human rights approach to poverty reduction strategies, and to the definition adopted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 2001. Some considered that while consensus on a normative definition would be difficult to achieve, efforts could be directed towards an operational definition based on criteria already enjoying wide acceptance.

71. A parallel debate took place on the desirability of a new international instrument to address human rights and poverty and extreme poverty. Several participants thought that existing human rights standards were sufficient and that their implementation should be the focus of poverty eradication efforts. Others believed that poverty eradication and monitoring efforts would benefit from an additional normative instrument more focused on the situation and needs of people living in extreme poverty.

#### **Human rights in operational strategies to address poverty**

72. A growing number of developing countries were at present implementing poverty reduction strategies and received technical and financial support from the international community to do so. The chances of success of those efforts would be enhanced if all Governments, the international financial or trade institutions and other development cooperation agencies would also adopt a consistent human rights approach to eradicate poverty.

73. Reforms aiming at improving governance were praised. The current emphasis on decentralizing governance mechanisms was considered a risk if it resulted in a regression from established national policies in terms of women’s empowerment or sensitivity to human rights. The added risk that conservative local elites could turn the process to their advantage was genuine.

74. Subsidies were debated on several occasions. There was agreement that their value resided in accurate targeting, effectively reaching poor and isolated groups, along with sunset clauses consistent with sustainable development objectives. Export subsidies of rich countries, on the other hand, were deemed to defeat the participation of poor countries in international exchanges and limit their ability to provide the extreme poor with sustainable livelihoods.

75. The limits of market mechanisms to deliver goods and services equitably to vulnerable groups were recognized and reinforced the need to build States able to manage social protection as well as to regulate the private sector. In situations of failed States, the obligations of international actors vis-à-vis the poor were more direct and obvious.

## **B. Recommendations**

**76. On behalf of and in consultation with the participants in the second Social Forum, held in Geneva on 22 and 23 July 2004, the Chairman established the following set of recommendations:**

### **1. The challenge of extreme poverty in today's world**

**77. All Governments and international institutions should recognize that poverty and extreme poverty must be addressed from a human rights perspective which brings value to policy-making by emphasizing the importance of empowerment and non-discrimination, involving the poor and listening to their experiences and perspectives, and strengthening accountability for poverty eradication.**

**78. The Social Forum calls for the Sub-Commission and other human rights mechanisms and forums to pay attention to situations of poverty and of the extreme poor in their activities and to continue the discussions about definitions of poverty and extreme poverty from a human rights perspective, starting with the proposal made in the report of the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission in 1996 and building on the work of the independent expert of the Commission on Human Rights between 1998 and 2004. The Social Forum looks forward to cooperating with the new mandate-holder on human rights and extreme poverty in this regard.**

### **2. Empowering the poor**

**79. Of special concern to the Social Forum is the situation of extreme poverty of millions of agricultural labourers, small farmers, pastoralists, fisherfolk, forest-dwellers, indigenous peoples and members of minorities who live in extreme precariousness and vulnerability and are often ignored by urban elites. The Social Forum notes the inadequate protection of the rights of these segments of the population, in particular women, under international law, and urges renewed debate on the ways and means of making existing instruments and mechanisms more effective.**

**80. The international community should support those involved in coalition-building and working directly with the poor to help them overcome their situation and combat stigmatization.**

**81. The indivisibility of human rights calls for a holistic assault on poverty and for specific efforts to enable the poor to become politically active in a process of empowerment that will permit their meaningful and informed participation in decision-making processes at the community, national and international levels. Non-citizens should also have a chance to make their voices heard.**

**82. The Social Forum notes the need to discuss further the elaboration of norms and mechanisms to empower the poor, and urges all States and other relevant actors at the international and national level to strengthen the implementation of existing human rights standards, paying special attention to women, the rural poor and other groups and individuals suffering discrimination or disadvantage.**

83. The Social Forum encourages States, international organizations and non-governmental organizations to move forward in the operationalization of a human rights approach in strategies and programmes for the eradication of poverty, through practical and context-specific tools and methodologies.
84. The Social Forum invites all stakeholders to contribute to the implementation and further development of the draft guidelines on a human rights approach to poverty reduction strategies, including by sharing comments with OHCHR.
85. Education is the first step to allowing the poor to become aware of their rights and to claim them. The Social Forum renews the call for the international community and for each Government to redouble efforts to realize the right to education for all, as reflected in human rights conventions, and to achieve Millennium Development Goals 2 (universal primary education) and 3 (eliminating gender disparity at all education levels) by 2015.
86. The Social Forum recognizes the importance of enabling the poor to exercise their right to work, to lift themselves in a lasting manner out of poverty through decent work. Governments must ensure compliance with the labour standards set forth under ILO conventions.
87. Social protection and welfare policies, on the one hand, and reproductive health policies, on the other hand, are integral to poverty eradication. The Social Forum encourages adequate budget allocations and the recruitment of qualified staff to implement them.
88. The Social Forum considers that the participation of the poor and those who work with them in the international and national debates about poverty is essential and a condition for empowering the poor and for the setting of new standards in this field.

### **3. At the national level**

89. The Social Forum recognizes the importance of national-level responsibility and national ownership in overcoming poverty. This requires the strengthening of State structures and the realization of the right to participate. Privatization of State structures and social public services may constitute a risk for the poor. It recognizes that work at this level is fundamental.
90. The Social Forum recommends to all relevant actors to consider possible mechanisms by which States can periodically present at the international level their extreme poverty eradication programmes, make their priorities known and analyse the results obtained so far. This information, among others, should be an important input for the deliberations of the Social Forum. The Social Forum recommends that the Secretariat prepare and send a questionnaire requesting relevant information in this regard, without duplicating other mechanisms or processes.
91. Poverty is aggravated, if not bred, by bad governance. The Social Forum recommends renewed efforts to improve free legal services and eradicate corruption, which diverts resources from pro-poor investments and is a major obstacle to development.

92. All human rights treaties should be ratified by all States, but in relation to extreme poverty the ratification of the two International Covenants is of particular importance. The Social Forum also recommends to States the prompt ratification of the United Nations Convention against Corruption so as to make possible its early entry into force.

#### **4. At the international level**

93. The Social Forum recommends to all existing human rights bodies and mechanisms (including special procedures and committees) to include, among other things, in their studies, reports and reviews of reports, the examination of situations of poverty, extreme poverty and poverty eradication programmes implemented by States and other actors. The Social Forum will follow up on this recommendation.

94. The Social Forum notes the existing gap between human rights perspectives on poverty and the international debate about economics. The Social Forum notes the need to continue work to strengthen dialogue and policy consistency between the programmes and decisions of international economic organizations and those of human rights organs and bodies. Member States should display consistency in their positions from one body to another.

95. The Social Forum underlines the growing need to include the human rights dimension in international economic decisions, such as those relating to debt cancellation, commodity price regulation, or multilateral and bilateral free trade treaties and other economic arrangements as a way of preventing the occurrence of poverty.

96. The Social Forum recommends to all responsible actors and to States in particular a stronger focus on poverty prevention, through a more systematic and rigorous assessment of the human rights impacts of economic policies. Poverty impact assessment processes and mechanisms should be made compulsory.

97. The Social Forum welcomes the initiative to establish an international fund against hunger and the steps taken by the Secretary-General in this regard. It encourages States, international organizations, the private sector and civil society at large to engage in this sort of initiative to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

#### **5. On the Social Forum**

98. The Social Forum reiterates its decision to continue to meet on an annual basis. It sees the active and meaningful participation of all stakeholders - grass-roots organizations and private sector included - as necessary to broadening the discussion. At the same time, it is mindful that this will require adequate resources and appropriate mechanisms and preparations at the local and regional levels to make such participation fruitful and meaningful.

99. The Social Forum values the format adopted for this year's meeting, i.e. the setting as its main objective contributing to other ongoing initiatives of the Sub-Commission. In this way, the Social Forum could fulfil its role as an "intellectual antechamber" to the Sub-Commission in matters within its competence. It is recommended that the same methodology continue in the future.

**Annex I**

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS**

**Documents for the Social Forum**

**Symbol**

**Title**

Provisional agenda

E/CN.4/Sub.2/SF/2004/1

Background note prepared by the Secretariat

E/CN.4/Sub.2/SF/2004/2

Poverty as a violation of human rights: working paper submitted by Mr. José Bengoa

E/CN.4/Sub.2/2004/44

**Background documents**

Implementation of existing human rights norms and standards in the context of the fight against extreme poverty: progress report submitted by José Bengoa, coordinator of the ad hoc group of experts

E/CN.4/Sub.2/2004/25

Idem: draft initial elements for discussion on possible guiding principles on human rights, poverty and extreme poverty

E/CN.4/Sub.2/2004/25/Add.1

The Social Forum: report of the Chairperson-Rapporteur

E/CN.4/Sub.2/2002/18

Human rights and poverty reduction: a conceptual framework, submitted by OHCHR

No symbol

## **Annex II**

### **PROGRAMME OF THE SOCIAL FORUM POVERTY, RURAL POVERTY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

**Thursday, 22 July 2004**

#### **Morning**

10 a.m.-10.30 a.m.      Opening of the Social Forum - Election of the Chairperson-Rapporteur

10.30 a.m.-1 p.m.      Panel 1 - Poverty and human rights: empowerment of people living in poverty

Bertrand Ramcharan, United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights

- The empowering role of the law to protect the vulnerable and marginalized

Kari Tapiola, Executive Director for the Rights Sector, ILO

- The right to work: its empowering role in the fight against poverty

Manfred Nowak, Director, Ludwig Boltzmann Institute

- Civil and political freedoms: their empowering role in the fight against poverty

General debate

#### **Afternoon**

3 p.m.-6 p.m.              Panel 2 - Rural poverty and extreme poverty: the voice of affected groups

Patricia Achille, International Movement ATD-Fourth World, Mauritius, director of a day-care centre

Emilio Gavarrete, Franciscans International, Honduras, poverty reduction projects with indigenous communities in Honduras

Jennifer Koinante, Maasai pastoralists groups, Kenya

Chaloka Beyani, Professor of International Human Rights Law, London School of Economics

Mr. Paul Hunt, Special Rapporteur on the right to health and former rapporteur of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

**Friday 23 July**

**Morning**

10 a.m.-1 p.m.                      Panel 3 - Human rights in operational strategies to address poverty

Phrang Roy, Assistant President, External Affairs Department, International Fund for Agricultural Development

- Human rights in operational strategies to reduce rural poverty

Leandro Despouy, Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers and former Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission on extreme poverty and human rights

- The poor's access to justice as part of the strategies to reduce poverty

Shahra Razavi, Coordinator of a United Nations Research Institute for Social Development study on the gender dimensions of economic policy

- Women's access to assets (credit/land) as part of strategies to reduce poverty

Siddiq Osmani, Professor of Development Economics at Dhaka and Ulster Universities

- Human rights in poverty reduction strategies

General debate

**Afternoon**

3 p.m.-5 p.m.                      Panel 4 - Recommendations on elements for incorporating human rights into poverty reduction strategies

The rapporteurs will present the results of each of the panels to the plenary

Plenary discussion

5 p.m.-6 p.m.                      Chairperson's closing remarks

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