Statement

by

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at the

68th Session of United Nations General Assembly

Third Committee

on

Agenda item 27: Social Development

New York
8 October 2013
Mr. Chairman,

At the very outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and other members of the Bureau, on election to this august forum. I assure you of my delegation’s full support in the smooth discharge of your work. I would also like to convey our thanks and appreciations to the Secretary General for his extensive and useful report on this agenda item. It will enrich our deliberations and guide our individual and collective efforts to achieve the common goal of Social Development.

2. My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by Fiji on behalf of G-77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

3. Every year, the Third Committee starts its work with deliberations on Social Development – and rightly so – because this is one global problem which if we are able to successfully solve would take care of so many other problems of humankind. The World Summit for Social Development (of 1995) and the Millennium Development Goals (of 2000) had set out a well-prescribed plan of action to achieve this objective. Since then, significant progress has been made in certain areas such as education, health, nutrition and reduction in extreme poverty. However, much remains to be done to realize the ultimate goals of poverty eradication, full productive employment and social integration of all sections of societies including the vulnerable and marginalized groups. Moreover, there are regional, cross-country and intra-country disparities in the success sectors. While China and most East Asian countries have achieved laudable progress in poverty and unemployment eradication, other regions like Sub-Saharan Africa and LDCs are still faced with huge challenges. The Secretary General’s report highlights that the aggregate number of people living on less than dollar 1.25 a day in Sub-Saharan Africa has doubled since 1990, which requires urgent attention. In LDCs, nearly 440 million live on less than dollar 1.25 a day. This looks like an insurmountable challenge as we inch towards the target year of 2015. Hence, we recognize (as the Secretary General’s Report emphasizes) the need for a Global Development Agenda Beyond 2015 which in the light of lessons learnt from the MDGs shall lay due emphasis on social dimension of sustainable development by focusing on the root causes of poverty rather than its social consequences and addressing inequalities through empowerment of people and formulation of participatory and all-inclusive policies and social action programmes.

Mr. Chairman,

4. We in Pakistan are fully aware of the deep and direct linkages between social development and social stability. Successive governments in Pakistan have made efforts to allocate maximum possible resources for social actions programmes and chalked out policies to reach out to the marginalized sections of the society. The present democratically elected government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has put socio-economic development at the heart of his government’s agenda. All other policies of the government, including the foreign policy, are being geared towards the realization of
this objective. The Government is looking towards greater trade and economic interaction with all neighbours, including India and Afghanistan and the ASEAN region. Social protection has been made an important part of the tool box for social development in Pakistan.

Mr. Chairman,

5. With regards to the elderly people, Pakistan Employees’ Old Age Benefits Institution provides pension to over 4 million retired workers. We have also extended this scheme to those working in the informal economy. The self-employed, too, have the option to register themselves in the scheme.

6. The Government has enacted legislation, formulated policies and devised programmes to provide support and protection to disabled people. These include the Disabled Persons Ordinance 1981, the National Policy on Disabled Persons of 2002 and the Special Citizens Act of 2008. The government has established special schools and vocational training institutes for the disabled and allocated them a special quota in the public sector jobs. In 2010, Pakistan ratified the Convention on rights of persons with disabilities.

7. Youth are one of the greatest assets for Pakistan. Roughly 68% of Pakistan’s population is under the age of 30. Like most other countries, we face the formidable task of creating jobs and ensuring decent work for our youth. The new government has therefore decided to spur the national economy through training and productive employment of youth. Steps are being taken to harness the capacities of youth through vocational and technical training programmes as well as youth micro-finance schemes. We are also promoting public-private partnership in this area.

8. In Pakistan, while the government and other stakeholders are playing their role for social development, the institution of family remains the bedrock of social inclusion, care and protection. As we mark the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family next year, there is need to respect and further strengthen this time tested natural institution all across the world.

Mr. Chairman,

9. The efforts of the government of Pakistan have unfortunately been constrained by the massive challenges of natural disasters – the earthquake of 2005 and floods of 2010 and 2011. Pakistan appreciates the ongoing technical and economic partnership with the international community to overcome the negative socio-economic consequences of these disasters.

10. I will conclude by saying that the challenges are huge but the objective is noble. We, therefore, must not balk or relax. Rather, we must further strengthen our resolve, re-sharpen our vision and redouble our efforts to ensure realization of universal social development in the foreseeable future. I thank you Mr. Chairman.