BRAZIL

Statement by Mr. Sérgio Rodrigues dos Santos
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(check against delivery)
Mr. Chairman,

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on this agenda item, which examined progress and challenges of poverty eradication.

The Brazilian Delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by Fiji, on behalf of G77 and China, and would like to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

In Rio+20, Member States reaffirmed their strong commitment to urgently free humanity from poverty and hunger. As President Dilma Rousseff stressed in her statement at the opening of the 68th session of the General Assembly, "the major step taken in Rio de Janeiro was to place poverty at the center of the sustainable development agenda. Poverty is not a problem exclusive to developing countries, and environmental protection is not a goal to be achieved merely once poverty has been overcome."

As President Dilma Rousseff reiterated in her statement during the opening of the 68th General Assembly, "the fight against poverty, hunger and inequality constitutes the greatest challenge of our time".

In this sense, she reminded us that the Post-2015 Agenda is aimed at creating a world in which it is possible to "grow, include and protect". By focusing on the eradication of poverty, we are contributing to the creation of an "immense contingent of citizens with better quality of life, increased access to information, and greater awareness of their rights".

Important progress has been achieved towards the goal of eliminating poverty in the last years through the combined efforts made by all stakeholders involved, including governments, the UN System, the private sector and civil society, which resulted in decreasing levels of extreme poverty in all developing regions.

However, the Brazilian Delegation shares the Secretary-General’s assessment expressed in his report that the positive results achieved so far may dangerously conceal the enormous challenges still ahead. So much so that half way through the second UN decade for the eradication of poverty the decrease in poverty rates has not been sufficient to reduce the absolute number of individuals living in extreme poverty in many developing countries.

It is also worth underlining that, although middle-income countries have been enjoying relatively good macroeconomic conditions in the last years, they still concentrate the majority of the world’s poor. In this sense, the UN System and developed countries must avoid the misconception that this category of countries can overcome the challenge of poverty eradication without the assistance of the UN System through its Funds, Programmes and Specialized Agencies.

Mr. Chairman,

The importance of the goal of poverty eradication is made even more evident now as we approach the deadline for the MDGs and start to engage in the discussions on the SDGs
and the UN post-2015 development agenda.

As Member States engage in various platforms for dialogue aimed at creating effective guidelines for the post-2015 Development Agenda, it is essential to sustain the momentum towards global poverty reduction.

As the Secretary-General’s report points out, employment and decent work are key drivers of poverty reduction. However, the recent global crisis and the slow global recovery have imposed important obstacles to the improvement of the employment conditions of the population. It is essential that Member States give due priority to creating productive employment and decent work, through strengthening skills and labour markets, improving the quality of jobs, and, in particular, extending support to vulnerable groups.

Inequality continues to hinder progress towards poverty eradication in many developing countries, including middle-income countries. The exclusion of the poorest from economic growth tends to benefit disproportionately those already better off, which may aggravate inequality and lead to social instability. Disparities in access to health, education and other social services essential to the realization of the human rights of people also constitute an important obstacle for poor people to break the cycle of poverty.

Social protection schemes, as the SG report notes, can significantly contribute to the reduction of poverty, as the example of Latin America and the Caribbean illustrates. In Brazil, the adoption of a number of effective social protection policies, known as conditional cash transfer programmes, as well as other governmental policies aimed at social inclusion and poverty eradication, concentrating on the poorest sectors of the population and other vulnerable groups have had important positive results.

Nevertheless, in order to be effective and sustainable, these social policies must be complemented with macroeconomic policy measures that foster job creation and decent work. Both elements are intrinsically related as far as poverty eradication is concerned. Only by fulfilling the basic social needs of its poor population will a country be able to unlock its productive potential and ensure a sustainable economic recovery.

In this regard, it is essential to find alternative and more effective means to promote job creation and decent work in the context of poverty eradication. In this connection, Brazil encourages the adoption of the International Labour Organization Global Jobs Pact as a general framework within which countries can implement policies that are tailored to their specific needs and priorities.

Mr. Chairman,

You can count on the constructive engagement of the Brazilian delegation in the discussions about this issue and in the negotiations of the draft resolution on poverty eradication.

Thank you.