STATEMENT BY

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ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEBATE
ON ERADICATION OF POVERTY AND OTHER
DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

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PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY
Mr Chairman,

South Africa aligns itself with the statements delivered on this debate by Fiji on behalf of the G77 and China and Ethiopia on behalf of the African Group, respectively.

My delegation subscribes to the view that the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), agreed-upon in the year 2000, managed to give the challenge of poverty the focused attention of the international community. We noted some observable gains in the fight to eradicate poverty and its attendant challenges, in the past 13 years. However more work still lies ahead.

Addressing this Committee in the past week my delegation expressed its appreciation that poverty eradication continues to receive priority attention between now and 2015 in the context of the MDGs. In addition my delegation welcomed the emerging consensus at the United Nations’ level that poverty eradication will continue to be prioritised, especially in the future development architecture in the post 2015 period. We mentioned that by building on the MDGs we must ensure that through concerted global efforts we will be able to eradicate poverty in the short-term to ensure the realisation of sustainable development in the development agenda beyond 2015.

My delegation welcomes the recognition of the multi-dimensional nature of poverty in the Secretary General’s report to ensure a comprehensive response to this challenge. South Africa concurs that hunger, unemployment and inequality continue to be the glaring features of poverty which manifest themselves in the form of, amongst others, food shortages, lack of access to universal health care, social protection, education, water and sanitation and other basic social challenges.

In this very same context South Africa, as a developing country, continues to be confronted by the afore-said social development challenges with the triple challenges of inequality, unemployment and poverty receiving priority attention of my Government.

Continuing disparities among regions continue to be a cause for concern with sub-Saharan Africa unlikely to meet its development aspirations in the near future. Against this backdrop African leaders adopted the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) which continues to serve as Africa’s socio-economic blueprint and a regional response to poverty and other related challenges. We call on the international community to assist by translating partnerships with Africa into tangible programmes to eradicate poverty in the 21st Century.
Mr Chairman,

We know that the challenges of poverty are exacerbated by the new and emerging challenges such as volatility of global markets; energy prices and food insecurity, which all require a collective response to cushion their impact on developing countries. It is in this context that South Africa reiterates the need to consolidate development cooperation to assist the global South, particularly Africa, in its efforts to address the multiple challenges triggered and compounded by poverty.

South Africa believes that to address the question of unemployment there is a need to invest in quality education to ensure that the youth acquire skills matching global market demands. We need a development architecture that ensures optimal facilitation of the transition from secondary to tertiary level, while also supporting efforts to stem the brain drain that manifests itself though migration of scarce skills from developing countries.

Mr Chairman,

The effects of climate change continue to blight efforts of developing countries to address poverty and hunger. Africa as an agrarian continent continues to experience unusual weather patterns such as droughts and heavy rain-falls that result in land degradation, desertification and water scarcity. As the Secretary General notes in his report:

“…extreme temperature appears to affect yields of important crops and can pose a threat to food security in many developing countries”

The impact of climate change on biodiversity remains a cause for concern to my delegation. Loss of biodiversity remains a threat to the needs of future generations. It is in this context that developing countries reiterate the importance of investment in adaptation to ensure greater resilience of the global South to the climate-induced effects.

To sum up, as we accelerate efforts to eradicate poverty in pursuit of sustainable development with its integrated dimensions we must be alive to the importance of differentiation among countries, based on their individual national circumstances. In this context the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities should continuously guide our engagements and debates as we build a future development agenda, that must be truly responsive to the needs of all in the world.

My delegation fully supports the Second Poverty Decade as a critically important avenue for development cooperation to address the fundamental challenge of poverty.

Thank you.