

New York Declaration on action against hunger and poverty

New York, 20th September 2004

At the initiative of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, of Brazil, we gathered in New York, on 20th September 2004, in a spirit of cooperation and dialogue, to discuss further international action to fight hunger, overcome poverty, and increase financing for development.

We recalled that extreme poverty affects over one billion people, who survive on less than a dollar a day. In Sub-Saharan Africa, some 300 million people live in absolute poverty. Millions of children continue to die each year for lack of health care, clean water, decent housing and adequate nutrition, while 20 000 people die each day from hunger-related causes. At the present stage of technological progress and agricultural production worldwide, the persistence of this situation is economically irrational, politically unacceptable and morally shameful.

We expressed our common view that tackling global poverty and social injustice is vital to the security and stability of developing and developed countries alike.

We acknowledged that a free, equitable and development friendly multilateral trading system can play an important role to eradicate the root causes of poverty and hunger by creating jobs, generating and distributing wealth. We need an international environment supportive of the necessary domestic efforts, including sound policies, good governance at all levels and the rule of law in order to achieve sustained economic growth with equity, and thus make progress in the defeat of hunger and poverty.

We emphasized the need to adequately address the plight of the victims of extreme poverty and hunger through a renewed political mobilization, which places economic and social development at the forefront of the national and international agendas.

Because of this shared responsibility and sense of urgency, we met, on the eve of the General Assembly and at the highest political level, to underscore our determination to act against hunger and poverty, and to reaffirm the pivotal role of the United Nations and its agencies, funds and programs.

At the World Food Summit and, later, at the Millennium Summit, the international community set up time-bound and measurable development goals. Implementing these commitments and meeting these targets is thus our responsibility.

Even as we recognized that some progress has been made, the general balance worldwide is still disappointing. The achievement of the agreed goals must not lag behind. If resolute and urgent actions are not taken, such goals will not be reached by 2015, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In 2002, the international community took a step forward and agreed not to leave the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus to chance. Some donor countries have, indeed, reached the official development assistance (ODA) goal of 0.7% of their GDP. Others have set timeframes to raise ODA levels. However promising these signs may be, much more needs to be done not to fall short of the additional US\$ 50 billion per year required at least to make good our promises of fulfilling the MDGs by 2015. We recalled that the Monterrey consensus was built upon the notion of a mutual commitment between developed and developing countries, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) being one expression of such a fruitful partnership.

We expressed the need to improve ODA so as to fulfill our commitments to help developing countries achieve growth and sustainable development, and ensure the human dignity that comes with a life free from hunger and poverty. In this respect, donor coordination and harmonization, predictability of aid, greater emphasis on budget support, medium-term commitments, and support for country-led poverty reduction strategies are objectives to be pursued.

In addition to the need to raise and improve assistance levels, we acknowledged that it is also appropriate and timely to give further attention to innovative mechanisms of financing – public or private, compulsory and voluntary, of universal or limited membership – in order to raise funds urgently needed to help meet the MDGs and to complement and ensure long-term stability and predictability to foreign aid. In this respect, we urge the international community to give careful consideration to the report that has been prepared by the Technical Group established by the January 30th 2004 Geneva Declaration. This report explores ways to find new resources for development, on a sound economic basis and at a significant level.

We welcome the various international efforts underway to identify concrete solutions. We welcome the various international efforts underway to identify concrete solutions and call for further coordination between different mechanisms. We call on governments, organizations, the private sector and the civil society to join this endeavor and contribute to ensure sustained progress. In this context, we also recalled the crucial role of multilateral institutions. Let us make effective efforts so that, in the September 2005 UN major event to review the progress achieved, we can claim that we are on the road towards the fulfillment of the MDGs.

There are enough skills and resources worldwide to free us all from hunger and poverty, and to promote sustainable economic development with social justice.

The greatest scandal is not that hunger exists, but that it persists even when we have the means to eliminate it. It is time to take action.

Hunger cannot wait.

New York, September 20th , 2004