

REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA



Permanent Mission of Zambia to the United Nations, 237 East 52nd Street, New York, NY 10022
Tex: (212) 888-5770 Fax: (212) 888-5213 E-mail: zambia@un.int

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STATEMENT BY

**H.E. PROF. MWELWA C. MUSAMBACHIME
AMBASSADOR/PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF ZAMBIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

ON

AGENDA ITEM 34:

**REVIEW OF FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
AND THE OUTCOME OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH
SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

New York
February 11, 2005

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation is pleased to participate at this important meeting on the Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the Twenty Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly. We welcome the report of the Secretary General which clearly provides an analysis of progress achieved in fostering a people-centred approach of the Social Summit. We would also like to take this opportunity to commend the international community for their support towards achieving the goals of Copenhagen.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

In the past decade the international Community has worked towards the full implementation of the goals of the Social Summit. At the country level, Zambia, and indeed other member States, have forged partnerships with the donor community to advance the key goals of the Social summit on employment, poverty eradication and social cohesion.

The past ten years have also been a period of major political and economic changes at the global level. These changes have impacted on us in numerous ways with respect to our ability to implement or fully realize the goals of the Social Summit.

Mr. Chairman,

At the regional level, Africa has been adversely affected by a number of global developments including the HIV/AIDS pandemic, poverty, the heavy debt burden and regional conflicts which are still ongoing. The combination of these factors have undermined and slowed down the overall attainment of the goals of the social summit. HIV/AIDS in particular, has ravaged communities curtailing productivity in many sectors especially rural and small scale agriculture in which the majority of the people are employed.

Mr. Chairman,

In order to address these challenges, Africa has over the last 10 years come up with major institutional changes and initiatives at the regional level which have among other equally important objectives helped to support the implementation of the Social Summit. The African Union transformed itself into a more vibrant entity focusing more on social and economic advancement than just political development of the continent. In addition the New Partnership for Africa's

Development (NEPAD) initiative was put in place to advance these goals. All these initiatives embrace human centered development.

Mr. Chairman,

At the national level, Zambia's experience with the implementation of social summit goals is well reflected in the assessment undertaken in the report of the Secretary General that has been presented.

Zambia in the last decade has developed strong democratic and human rights institutions, much in line with the political changes that have been taking place globally. These have increased peoples participation in the social development processes. A strong civil society has emerged and continues to grow, and along with it has been the involvement of all segments of our society in the development process. In this respect Zambia has witnessed meaningful progress in implementing the priority areas of the social summit in particular in the area of social cohesion, women's rights and education, due to the inclusive nature of our democracy and human right institutions.

Mr. Chairman,

Zambia has witnessed a number of challenges in striving to achieve the goals of the social summit.

Firstly, the eradication of poverty has been a major challenge for Zambia. In its attempt to reduce the levels of poverty, Zambia has put in place measures to achieve broad-based pro-poor growth by investing in education, health and other social sectors.

Secondly, the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS have and still continue to wreak havoc on our people, the worst hit being the productive workforce. The HIV/AIDS pandemic has also had a negative impact on the family, leading to a large increase in the number of orphans. By 2003, 19% of Zambian children below 18 had been orphaned by HIV/AIDS.

My government is however, committed to achieving the UNAIDS/WHO initiative of having at least 100,000 people on anti-retroviral treatment by the end of 2005, as well as the millennium development goal of halting and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS. We are confident that this objective will gradually become a reality. Already, the prevalence levels of the disease in the 15-49 age group has reduced from 18.6% in 1998 to about 16% in 2004.

Thirdly, the heavy debt burden poses another major challenge in fully implementing the social summit goals. Zambia is therefore, looking forward to achieving the Completion Point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC)

Initiative, which would result in debt service relief funds being channeled to priority areas of social development.

Mr. Chairman,

In ensuring that poverty reduction Programmes are effectively implemented, government is putting in place a well focused resource allocation system. In this regard the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework Management system (MTEF) has become operational and is assisting stakeholders to identify areas of intervention on strategies to which resources are channeled. The MTEF is also a monitoring tool for Programmes being implemented in the public sector. Further an Integrated Financial Management Information System is also being put in place to enhance prudent management of public resources.

The other major challenge is to enhance good governance. In achieving this objective, the country has embarked upon the implementation of the decentralization policy which is key to ensuring participation and decision making as well as programme implementation at the local level.

Mr. Chairman,

It is clear that we have a great task ahead of us and we remain convinced that these challenges on poverty, unemployment, inequality and social exclusion will have to be fully overcome if we are to meaningfully contribute to the attainment of the social summit goals. It is our hope that the good partnerships we have had with the donor community, will continue to grow with the overall objective of increasing aid available for our social development.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, It is our hope that this session will renew our collective efforts in advancing a "people centred development" agenda.

I thank you!