



**WORLD  
SUMMIT  
FOR SOCIAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

Copenhagen  
Denmark  
6-12 March 1995

**Attacking  
Poverty**

**Building  
Solidarity**

**Creating  
Jobs**

## Talks Resuming on Social Summit Agenda

New York, 21 October 1994—Racing a series of diplomatic deadlines, negotiators from more than 150 countries will begin new talks on Monday, 24 October, aimed at reaching a consensus on the goals of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development.

The week-long informal consultations, which come at a crucial juncture in the 14-month preparatory process, will be overseen by the Chairman of the Summit Preparatory Committee, Ambassador Juan Somavia of Chile.

The Summit—to be held 6-12 March in Copenhagen, Denmark—is an unprecedented undertaking for the United Nations: the first time in history that the international community has convened a major conference devoted solely to social development.

The Summit's underlying premise is that the world's people cannot live in peace and harmony without international action to deal with the increasingly globalized problems of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration.

### Leaders Reserving Places

Coming six months after the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, the Copenhagen Summit is the centrepiece in an ongoing series of high-level United Nations meetings on economics and development in the 1990s.

More than 33 Heads of State and Government have already announced plans to travel to Copenhagen, and preparations are under way for NGO Forum '95, a simultaneous meeting nearby of thousands of nongovernmental organizations from all over the world.

But with the Summit less than five months away, Government delegates and United Nations organizers acknowledge that much work remains to be done to shape key details of the Summit agenda.

A major focus of next week's talks—to be held during meetings of the General Assembly's

Third (Social) Committee—will be to redraft the Draft Programme of Action, a document spelling out the specific steps that Heads of State and Government are expected to approve in March.

### Major Objectives

Negotiators say they need to whittle the text down to a more manageable length—the current working paper is 54 pages long—and to develop a consensus on priorities among the wide range of issues proposed for inclusion by various delegations.

Because of the variety and complexity of the core issues—poverty, unemployment, and problems of violence and social disintegration—the earlier discussions have been extraordinarily wide-ranging. The task now is to sharpen the focus.

Negotiators made major headway last month on the Draft Declaration, hammering out texts for nine broad "commitments" for social development. Two documents emerged from those consultations: a Chairman's Progress Report on Elements for the Draft Declaration (A/CONF.166/PC/L.18), and a supplementary Chairman's "background note", issued 20 October, that elaborates on ideas put forward in the Progress Report.

The talks opening 24 October are called "intersessional informal consultations" because they will serve as a bridge between the second session of the Preparatory Committee last August and its third and final session 16-27 January.

A comparable round of intersessional talks was held in advance of the recently concluded Cairo Population Conference. Such negotiations can help ensure that the broad dimensions of an agreement are in place as early as possible.

The negotiations, opening at 10 A.M. Monday, 24 October, in Conference Room 1, will begin with a Plenary session. There will be



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a general exchange of views on the Draft Programme of Action, after which the delegations will separate into two working groups. One group of about 30 delegations—called the “Friends of the Chairman” — will concentrate on the Draft Declaration, while a larger, open-ended group — chaired by Mr. J.M.N. Richelle of the Netherlands — will work on the Programme of Action.

The objective is to produce a set of instructions that the Social Summit Secretariat can use to produce new drafts of the two texts in time for the third and final PrepCom in January.

There is wide agreement that the Summit is urgently needed.

“The capacity of States to provide a social and political environment in which their citizens can lead useful, productive and fulfilling lives is eroding”, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said recently. “The global social crisis threatens many States as much as any foreign army”.

The Summit grows out of the recognition that a lack of security in people’s daily lives — the lack of productive employment, a decent standard of living, and social cohesion — is wearing away the moral fibre of contemporary societies.

“In rich countries and poor countries, in large countries and in small, there is a prevailing sense of imminent social disorder”, the

Secretary-General told the Preparatory Committee at its first meeting in January 1994.

The World Summit for Social Development is part of a continuum of conferences that the United Nations is using to help chart a global shift in development policies.

These include the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, formally known as the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which put environmentally “sustainable development” at the top of the world’s agenda.

The International Conference on Population and Development, 5-13 September 1994, sought to build on those commitments by setting global population guidelines.

The Copenhagen Summit seeks to further shape the global agenda by highlighting the idea of “people-centred development”, whose goal is the improvement of life for all of humanity.

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