



## WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Copenhagen  
Denmark  
6-12 March 1995

**Attacking  
Poverty**

**Building  
Solidarity**

**Creating  
Jobs**

### MAJOR HEADWAY REPORTED IN TALKS ON SOCIAL SUMMIT

NEW YORK, 28 October -- More than 150 countries involved in preparations for next year's World Summit for Social Development cleared a crucial hurdle this week, hammering out a broad consensus on the shape of the final negotiating texts.

The Summit, the first major United Nations conference devoted solely to social development, is to be held from 6 to 12 March in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Organizers see it as an essential first step in rallying national and international action to eliminate poverty, unemployment and the myriad causes of social disintegration. More than 40 Heads of State or Government have already announced plans to attend, and many more are expected.

Although some areas of disagreement remain, there was wide agreement among delegations that the latest talks had produced clear guidelines for the Summit Secretariat to use in drawing up new, streamlined drafts of the two basic texts: a Declaration -- consisting of nine key "commitments" -- and a five-part Programme of Action. The new texts are expected to be ready by early December.

The talks this week consisted of five days of informal consultations. Their chief objective was to clarify the structure and substance of the texts, and their relation to each other -- a task that began in August, during the second session of the Summit Preparatory Committee.

Delegations agreed that this groundwork had to be completed well before the final session of the Preparatory Committee, which will be held in New York from 16 to 27 January.

"Personally, I am very happy about the results of this week", said Ambassador Juan Somavia of Chile, who oversaw the talks in his capacity as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee. "We still have much work to do, but we have greatly clarified the issues". Ambassador Somavia described the talks as "an opportunity for everyone to see all the elements on the table".

The representative of Algeria, current Chair of the 131-member "Group of 77" developing countries, declared that "we have made definite progress since the second PrepCom". "I think we can all agree that these are documents we can all take home and show to our authorities with a justified sense of accomplishment", said the representative of Zimbabwe, which is a Vice-Chairman of the Preparatory Committee.

Several delegations went even further, characterizing the outcome of this week's consultations, coming after months of uncertainty, as little short of miraculous.

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Ambassador Richard Butler of Australia, also a Vice-Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, said Ambassador Somavia had "almost miraculously organized and concluded" an important Chairman's background note on the Draft Declaration. He added that Mr. J.N.M. Richelle of the Netherlands had performed "similar magic" on the Programme of Action "under very difficult and complex conditions".

"What we have before us, I think, will guide us very well at the negotiations in January", Ambassador Butler said. "We are engaged in a truly great enterprise, which is redirecting the energies of the world community into insuring the security and welfare of people -- as opposed to our obsession of the past, the security and welfare of states".

Two new documents emerged from the session. One, a "Background note presented by the Chairman", is a 20-page distillation of the elements proposed for inclusion in the Declaration. It was assembled by Ambassador Somavia and the Summit Secretariat.

The other document, prepared by Mr. Richelle, is titled "Note presented by the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole". It is a 4-page summary of the agreements -- and disagreements -- over the language, organization and substance of the Programme of Action.

Mr. Richelle and Ambassador Somavia both reported that the chief areas of disagreement continue to be the follow-up to the Summit and the resources needed to put its commitments into action. "This remains my biggest worry", Ambassador Somavia said.

Mr. Richelle reported a consensus that "there is no need to create new institutions for the implementation and follow-up". But during the talks, the Group of 77 -- and individual developing nations -- stressed that the texts needed clear provisions as to what financial resources will be made available.

Negotiators plan eventually to integrate the two texts. The Declaration would proclaim broad commitments to social development, while the Programme of Action would explain how those commitments would be put into action.

Mr. Richelle said that there had been substantial agreement on the chapters of the draft Programme of Action dealing with poverty, unemployment, and social integration, but "differences of view remain on such economic issues as debt relief and ODA". While there is "a growing consensus" on such issues as the need to incorporate social dimensions in structural adjustment programmes, Mr. Richelle went on, "specific actions nevertheless remain to be worked out".

The representative of India, also a Vice-Chairman, said that his delegation had "some difficulty with some formulations" in the documents. But, he added, he was convinced that "we now have a basis, with some minor alterations, to enter into serious negotiations -- and a better idea about how to link the two documents".

"We were somewhat nervous about the political process", the representative of the Summit's host country, Mr. Hugo Ostergaard-Anderson of Denmark, confessed to the assembled delegates today. "But I leave New York in a much more confident mood".

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