

**STATEMENT OF MR. JEFFREY SACHS
PROFESSOR AND DIRECTOR OF THE EARTH INSTITUTE OF
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
SPECIAL ADVISER TO THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL
ON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Director-General Carlos Margariños, Delegates. It is a great honour for me to be here and if you have heard a lot of speeches this morning I am sure that you were just riveted by the powerful remarks that you just heard by Rubens Ricupero, who brings us to the core of why we are here today. He is, of course, a great leader of UNCTAD and one of the world's great leaders together with the Director-General of UNIDO in getting us back to the heart of where we need to be in the international agenda. It is sobering to hear Rubens say that UNIDO and UNCTAD were created in the 1960s to put development at the centre of the agenda and here we are at the end of 2003 struggling to keep it on the agenda. This has not been a good year for development.

But before we despair, I have to say that it was absolutely inspiring to hear the remarks of these leaders. To hear what is really happening with such brave and visionary leadership in places like Madagascar, Timor-Leste, in Tanzania, in Sierra Leone, in Panama, where the lives of millions of people are at stake in the success of development.

No, development was pushed off the world's agenda this year by an agenda about war and our great struggle is to put development back to the centre of the world's agenda, where it belongs. It is fitting that today is World AIDS Day. The greatest pandemic in modern history, a disease that will claim the lives of 8,000 people while we deliberate, just in this one day. We could say that a virus is going to kill these people today, but in a deep sense they are going to be dying of their poverty, because they are going to be dying of a disease that is treatable. They are going to be dying of conditions that could be treated this very day with the miracles of technologies and medicine that are available, but they will not be treated because they are too poor to gain access to even life-saving central medicines.

September 11, which has dominated the world's agenda for more than two years, claimed 3,000 lives. Every day 20,000 people are dying of their poverty from AIDS, TB and malaria. Every single day. And that is why our agenda has to be at the centre of the world's discussion.

And yet, where are we? This year the world will spend 900 billion dollars on armaments, 50 billion dollars on development assistance and perhaps 1 billion dollars on AIDS. My own country, the United States, will spend 450 billion dollars on the military and 10 billion dollars on development assistance. A ratio of 45 to 1. I see it as trying to fly an aeroplane with one wing. What kind of world are we creating when we have to struggle so hard to keep the development agenda on the world's mind?

I am so thrilled that UNIDO put the Millennium Development Goals as its centrepiece for this Conference. This is, to the extent that we have it, the world's commitment to the reduction and eventual elimination of extreme poverty. One hundred and fifty world leaders and subsequently all 191 member countries of the United Nations committed to bold, specific, quantified, time-limited goals to fight poverty, disease, hunger, illiteracy, environmental degradation.

In 2002 it looked like there were promising steps forward. At Monterrey the developed countries recommitted to the international target of 0.7 of one per cent of gross domestic product of development assistance. My country too, the United States, signed that document, with its paragraph 42 pointing out the 0.7 of one per cent commitment. We are just 60 billion dollars a year shy of that right now. Johannesburg recommitted us to an agenda of environmental protection ten years after so much of the Rio agenda had been neglected, but 2003 brought us an agenda that it seemed sometimes was only of war. The world was dominated with the debates over war, with the sights of war, with the debates over terrorism. As if the root causes were not by far the most essential for the billions of impoverished people in this world.

I think our greatest challenge is to make 2004 again a year in which we can have a real and honest agenda that fits the needs of the whole world and especially the five-sixths of humanity in the developing world and especially half the world that lives on less than two dollars a day and especially the one-sixth of humanity, the one billion people who literally fight for their survival every day, because they do not know whether a disease, or a drought, or some other calamity is going to lead to their premature death. That is our task here.

Now one thing I do know, having been a student of the great studies of this institution, UNIDO, and of UNCTAD and from my experience in many parts of the world, these Millennium Development Goals can be met. We have 12 years to meet them. Every one of them can be met in every one of your countries. But I also know, without doubt, that we are way off track of meeting those goals. In Tanzania, Sierra Leone, in Madagascar, you look at the rates of mortality of young children, which are supposed to be reduced by two-thirds by the year 2015, and they are not being reduced at all right now, because of disease, because of the AIDS epidemic, because of malaria that is resurgent in the face of drug resistance. And so many of these other goals are not going to be met if we do not make a fundamental change.

So here is the paradox: the world for its own safety and stability and survival needs for these goals to be met and they can be met, but they will not be met on the basis of business as usual. We need in 2004 to make a breakthrough. Do not think that it cannot be done. You in the room have the voices, you have the votes in the world to turn the international agenda back to where it needs to be. Even if the United States does not seem to be there sometimes, it can hear your voice. We cannot go on with an agenda just of war and terror and other issues without an agenda of development and saving millions of people dying of disease.

Now I believe that this has to emanate from within your countries and when I hear your powerful words I believe that this can happen, but, as you know painfully well, this cannot happen by yourselves. This is not just a matter of willpower and wishful thinking and wish fulfilment and the Prime Minister of Tanzania was very clear about that. Unless there is global partnership this cannot succeed.

I believe what is required fundamentally, and I will be brief, is three pillars within each of the countries struggling to meet the Millennium Development Goals. First are the policies within the countries that can make these goals fulfilled and we heard from all of these leaders their commitment to them and their progress in undertaking those policies. Second, and this is vital, is an international system that can support them. Especially giving access to exports from these countries so that they have the chance to earn their way in the world, and third, and this is absolutely fundamental, is greatly increased public investments within these countries in basic infrastructure and in social outlays for health, nutrition, family planning, disease

control, education of children, which will make the difference. And there is the crux of the matter. Those are investments beyond the financial means of the poorest countries. What Rubens Ricupero just vividly explained. And that is where the development cooperation and the will of the rich countries has to combine with the obvious will and clarity of vision of the poorest countries to make this possible.

As the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the Millennium Development Goals we are committed to working with every country that would like to do so, to design detailed strategies to reach these goals on time by the year 2015 in every area. To help governments put on the table the realistic proposals for social investments and for infrastructure that are vital for success. And by doing so to help get those funded. We have got to move beyond a situation where the United States spends twice on Iraq reconstruction for what it does on all the official development assistance in all the rest of the world. Twenty billion dollars this year for Iraq, ten billion for all other development assistance for all of the rest of the world and about one billion dollars for all of Africa. This is a situation that cannot be maintained. We have to move to a situation where realistic plans are funded as the rich countries promised they would be. They promised and they promised again and they promised again and in 2004 they are going to have to deliver on those promises.

The United Nations, in my opinion, is the critical forum and venue and set of specialized institutions that can help every country to bring these aims to fruition. To do this will need the active work and leadership and institutions such as UNCTAD and, of course, UNIDO. And I know, having spoken with the Secretary-General in recent days on my way here, how keen he is for that engagement, how proud he is of your leadership and how intent he is that the year 2004 be the breakthrough year for the Millennium Development Goals.

Thank you very much.