

Informal Preparatory Meeting for 2008 ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review

Draft Statement

by

**H.E. Mr. Antonio Pedro Monteiro Lima - Permanent Representative, Cape Verde
United Nations Headquarters, New York, 6 March 2008**

Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Over the past years, Cape Verde has made significant strides in meeting the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs and the fruits of our hard work are starting to show results with the help of our partners and our diaspora. Of the MDGs, primary education for all is a reality and a program to reinforce the quality of the education system, secondary education and vocational training is in progress. Gender equality is guaranteed in primary, secondary and higher education. There is a strong presence of women in public institutions, such as the Parliament and the Government. The mortality rate has decreased from 43.5 per thousand through in 1995 to 20.2 per thousand in 2005; the mortality of under five-year-olds decreased from 56 per thousand in 1993 to 22.6 per thousand in 2005. Access to drinking water rose from 42% in 1990 to 85% in 2006.

Despite our hard work, Cape Verde remains one of the most economically and ecologically vulnerable countries in the world. We are highly dependent on Official Development Assistance and emigrants' remittances and we suffer from food insecurity which is structural, caused by agro-ecological constraints which are made worst by drought and desertification.

It is against the backdrop that we decided to reach out and volunteer for the "AMR National Voluntary Presentations" and the "Delivering as one initiative" to get advice and help to tackle remaining challenges.

Taking the experience of Cape Verde as a point of departure, as a contributor to the first NVPs, I would like to use the remainder to make some suggestions on concrete steps which the Council and the Secretariat could take to ensure that the AMR is designed in such a way that it provides the best possible support to countries to help them to deliver on implementation.

A successful NVP, is an NVP which delivers results. Volunteering for a NVP in the context of the AMR is therefore more than just holding a successful presentation at the high-level segment of ECOSOC. Since, as Mr. Sha rightfully pointed out, development is a complex process and quick fixes are rare. The NVP will only have an impact if it is *embedded in a proper preparatory and follow-up process*.

As this is a particularly important point, please allow me to expand a bit on this. On the preparations side, I recall that due to the late decisions of the Council our *preparations* for the 2007 July session were somewhat rushed. Also, as it was the first AMR, we were not exactly sure what was expected from us by the ECOSOC membership. It is therefore encouraging news to hear that in the run up to the 2008 NVPs the Secretariat is assisting countries at the different stages of their preparations and is helping them in defining their objectives for the NVPs. This will certainly enhance the value of the presentations and I am already looking forward to see the fruits of this work in July.

At the moment, the primary focus of Cape Verde is how to follow-up on the NVPs to see that the obstacles and challenges identified during the AMR are effectively addressed. In addition to the challenges, which I mentioned at the beginning of my statement, Cape Verde is also struggling with two new challenges. First, the problem of drug trafficking which has become increasingly seriously over the last years and second to ensure that Cape Verde' graduation from the LDC status be ensured in a successful and sustainable manner.

To date, the Council has provided little guidance to NVP countries on how it envisages the follow-up to NVPs to be carried out. We feel that NVP countries would benefit from guidance. When conceptualizing the follow-up process the guiding principle should be how to facilitate maximum progress in implementation on the ground.

Reporting back, as Mr. Sha, suggested is a good idea, to hold ourselves continuously accountable, but what is more important than there mere act of report back, is that there is the kind of progress in implementation which merits reporting back to the Council.

To ensure that AMR is facilitating implementation, AMR findings need to be fed back into the national development strategies, as a first step national development strategies should be once more carefully reviewed in order to ensure that the key obstacles are adequately reflected in the national strategy. If there is the feeling that there is need for action beyond what is envisaged in the current national development strategy, in a second step a short list of well targeted interventions which would help address the obstacles should be identified.

The proposed list should therefore clearly spell out which key interventions NVP country will carry out on their own as well as interventions where the support of the international community is needed. It should also spell out how the UN system could support these efforts.

The list of proposed interventions could be prepared during the year following the NVP, and could be presented during the next ECOSOC coordination segment either in a formal or informal session. Such a discussion would hopefully help the country to mobilize international support for the key interventions which it is planning to take.

With regard to "Delivering as One" UN pilots, my country has had a positive experience thus far. Cape Verde has taken the lead in driving the much talked about UN reform at country-level. The country has already seen, as the first country in the world, the successful establishment of the so called "Joint office." On this point, I would like to say that we are aware that the experience of a small country could not be eventually the

same than a bigger country, but, it's seems that the most important in this complex and sensitive process is that the link should be more evident between the reform at country level and the global reform of the UN System. Moreover, this process helped in better positioning the UN development system in Cape Verde to assist the country after its graduation to the group of Middle Income Countries (MICs) and respond better to national development priorities.

Ladies and gentlemen,

While countries volunteering for NVPs should be the primary beneficiaries of their participation in the NVPs, the lessons learned during the NVPs should also be made available to a broader audience. From Mr. Sha's intervention, I understand that DESA is already working on a web platform and database on "policies that work" which would include lessons learned from past AMRs, latest innovation, new strategies and access to a community of experts. Such a web platform will certainly help countries learn how other countries have addressed similar challenges.

In addition to such a global virtual platform, a regional level exchange could also be something very useful, as countries within the same region tend to be confronted by similar challenges. Former NVP countries could hold regional meetings to engage in an exchange on their lessons learned with other countries from the region.

Thank you.