



**Intergovernmental Institution for the use of Micro-algae Spirulina Against Malnutrition**  
**Permanent Consultative Observer with the United Nations Economic and Social Council**

**COMMISSION ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT  
46<sup>TH</sup> SESSION**

**This year's theme is "Employment, Aging and Disability"**

**STATEMENT BY:**

**AMBASSADOR REMIGIO MARADONA  
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF IIMSAM  
PERMANENT OBSERVER REPRESENTATIVE TO THE  
UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

**(UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS, 11 FEBRUARY, 2008)**

**Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,**

Allow me first of all to congratulate you on assuming the Presidency of the Commission for Social Development in this session. On behalf of the Intergovernmental Institution for the use of Micro-algae Spirulina Against Malnutrition, IIMSAM, I am most honoured to address the 46<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission for Social Development (CSD) that provides us an opportunity to collectively explore the themes of vital importance in the Development Debate that matter not only to the Member States but also to the humankind.

This year's theme is "Employment, Aging and Disability" and I put across my views from the vantage point of the IIMSAM and its mandate to realise a world free of hunger and malnutrition by making Spirulina a key driver to eradicate malnutrition, achieve food security, and bridge the health divide. The Developing and the Least Developed Countries are a special priority area for our organization.

The key to the empowerment of all people is education which is the the greatest equalizer and therefore the key to ensuring inclusiveness; and the assurance of gainful employment. In a rapidly globalizing world, the challenge is to ensure that the benefits of economic growth and development translate into productive employment for all. As our economies become globalised, workers are becoming part of a global value chain. We find that women and the disabled are more likely to be at the lower end of the production ladder and are in fact in the informal economy.

The ILO Conventions represent a watershed in the progress of the workers for recognition and for human rights but much need to be done to address the deprivations and discriminations faced by the marginalized especially women and the disabled. The very issue of their "invisibility"; social protection; skill-building, technology development, marketing skills, credit availability; and, finally effective organization and political participation needs to be highlighted and addressed on a priority basis. Our main challenge is that of increasing the skills, productivity and earnings of these workers. We need to put in place processes which will ensure that the benefits of progress reach the most disadvantaged sections of our population. We all have to work diligently for realization of this important objective.

In essence, it is much the same as has been propounded in the Social Choice Theory in the field of Welfare Economics where individual preferences are aggregated to form a collective preference. Collective preferences by us lead to affirmative action, which in turn leads to desired outcomes for universal betterment. This gains special importance in the context of building substantial capabilities especially in the field of sustainable development.

The Capability Approach that is essentially the work of Dr. Martha Nussbaum and Noble Laureate Dr. Amartya Sen explores human well being or welfare; and emphasizes on functional capabilities in terms of the substantive freedoms people have. Poverty is understood as Capability Deprivation.

It is imperative that our deliberations lead to outcomes that result in building substantial capabilities for the peoples of the world. Right priorities are to be set and innovation would be the key. The carts are to be set after the horses so that the thing moves.

Majority of the world still lives in villages. The cities have been connected to the global economy and have taken off. Do the same for rural areas and they will take off too. Today, alas, many villages are not even connected by road or telecom to the closest town, let alone the world. Connectivity enhances the value of every other rural investment, since it empowers people through improved mobility and access. Rural productivity cannot be high without roads, but can be very high with them. Studies undertaken by the International Food

Policy Research Institute, IFPRI, in China, Vietnam and some African countries point to the same conclusion - rural roads do more for growth and poverty mitigation than virtually anything else.

Development is not just about our increasing the rates of economic growth, but fundamentally it is about translating this into improving the quality of life of our people to create opportunities for all our people to lead a life of dignity and self-respect. It is about increasing our people's access to such basic needs as nutrition, health, education and gainful employment.

Poverty Alleviation, Food Security, Right to Development and Social Justice are all important challenges for all our institutions. Only when basic necessities are fulfilled will there be real progress. Malnutrition, no doubt, is the biggest challenge that the humankind faces and must be overcome on an immediate priority basis, should there be a sincere will to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

The linkage between nutrition and human development is well recognized and so is the significance of quality nutrition in public health. Malnutrition is by far the most important single cause of illness and death globally. The costs of malnutrition in terms of lost development and productivity are enormous. Even mild to moderate malnourishment in the womb reduces future cognitive development of a child. It has serious impacts on groups that have traditionally been marginalized such as women and the girl child. Thus malnutrition plays a crucial role in the reproduction of poverty from one generation to the next and must be tackled to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

Intergovernmental Institution for the use of Micro- algae Spirulina Against Malnutrition aspires to make Spirulina a key driver to eradicate malnutrition, achieve food security and bridge the health divide. Our initiatives that the organization would implement in the year 2008 have a special priority for the Developing and the Least Developed Countries.

It is an aspiration to build capabilities for the peoples of the world by delivering nutritional benefits associated with Spirulina along with its inherent preventive and curative aspects; and concomitant benefits of easy availability, accessibility, and affordability coupled with its easy assimilation in the human body. We see it as an important policy tool of tremendous practical significance to enrich the human capital across the globe.

I am grateful to eminent platforms like the Commission for Social Development that are indeed a great avenue for a fledgling intergovernmental organization that IIMSAM is, to put forth its view to the peoples of the world. We see it as an important exercise and an opportunity to increase stakeholders to fulfill and realise our mandate.

We have to do much before we redeem the pledges we have so often taken. As long as there are tears and suffering, so long our work will not be over. And so we have to labour and to work, and work hard, to give reality to our dreams and ambitions.

You are most welcome to join in our efforts. Thank you!