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**Statement by the Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation,
Head of the Russian Delegation to the 2007 ECOSOC Substantive Session
H.E. Mr. Alexander YAKOVENKO
at the Annual Ministerial Review: "Strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and
hunger, including through the global partnership for development"**

Geneva, July 4, 2007

Mr. President,

The Russian Federation has the first ministerial review of the progress made in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, which should be the central focus of the international financing for development (World Summit in 2005), as well as the internationally agreed development goals, first and foremost the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

We note with satisfaction that the first ever ECOSOC's Annual ministerial review is dedicated to the eradication of poverty and hunger, which is without any doubt one of the most pressing issues here and now.

We are confident that the Review will allow the international community to reach a new

Fight against poverty and hunger is, of course, primary responsibility of the countries themselves. We recognize that the global partnership for development (GPD) is a key element of the international financing for development (IFD) strategy.

From 1999 to 2005 the proportion of regions where the poverty rate is less than 20% of the population has increased from 40% to 48%.

At the same time, the international community should continue to support the development, as domestic efforts should be reinforced by the internationally agreed international measures taking into account national specificities and with respect to the sovereignty and national ownership.

Russia supports the concept of global partnership for practical implementation at all levels of the commitments made in the outcome documents of the major UN conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields.

Global partnership remains a topical issue due to the fact that despite the overall positive progress, the least developed countries, are off-track to meet the MDGs. Special attention should be given to the specific problems and needs of Africa

We are confident that the United Nations should play a central role in enhancing international development cooperation in close collaboration with all the other multilateral agencies dealing with the issues of financing, trade and development, in order to contribute to the progressive economic growth, eradication of poverty and hunger and ensuring sustainable development.

Mr. President,

Driven by the principles of solidarity and equal partnership, Russia has for a long time been fulfilling significant international assistance obligations, which are in line with our historical destiny with our country. Our assistance enabled a number of countries to deal with their major economic challenges and to lay the foundation of the subsequent industrialization.

Successful graduation from the transition period and achieving sustainable rates of economic growth enable us to embark on enhancing our international development assistance.

There is no need to once again dwell on our efforts, both on bilateral and multilateral levels, to alleviate the debt burden of the developing countries. Apart from debt relief, by the end of 2006 Russian development assistance has doubled compared to 2003-2004 and exceeded 200 mln. US dollars annually.

In the last year we have doubled our contributions to the UN Funds and Programmes, other UN entities.

Our development assistance has also been increasing on a regional level as well as on a global level. In 2006, our assistance to Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia has increased by 15% compared to 2005. In addition, we have launched a number of initiatives to fight infectious diseases, as well as in the field of education and energy security to the total amount of about 600 mln. US dollars.

This time the President of the Russian Federation endorsed the Concept of the Russian

the main guidelines for future work in this field. Discussion of this Concept is a significant milestone on the way towards the establishment in Russia, in accordance with the President's order, of an effective development assistance mechanism.

Russian international development assistance policy is aimed at building a stable, just and democratic world order, poverty eradication as well as at ensuring sustainable economic development in the developing and post-conflict countries, overcoming the consequences of emergencies including natural and manmade disasters, promoting dialogue between civilizations, eliminating the root causes of the modern security challenges.

The implementation of the Concept will allow to gradually increase Russian financing for development commitments, which according to the existing plans, might reach in the near future