

Ministerial Round Table 1
Regional dimensions of the implementations of the results
of the International Conference on
Financing for Development
(Wednesday, 29 October 2003)

Summary by the co-chairs

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Deepening Regional Cooperation

A number of speakers, underscored the role of regional cooperation in support of the Monterrey Consensus. Regional cooperation and inter-governmental partnerships, particularly in Asia and Africa, are increasingly used as an adjunct to the implementation of international resolutions and commitments and as a way of localizing the Monterrey principles. To this end, the New Partnership for African Development, NEPAD, has made impressive strides, in a relatively short period, in forging partnerships across the continent that promotes both good governance and socio-economic objectives. Other sub-regional institutions on the continent, such as ECOWAS, in West Africa, and ECA, in East Africa, have achieved commendable progress on a number of fronts, including tariff harmonization, currency convertibility and a cross-border investment code. The business sector, and civil society, is increasingly integrated into these initiatives especially with regard to corporate responsibility and the rights of the vulnerable groups, including women, children and HIV/AIDS victims. In the casharmonizdst Ls ear

broad-based popular participation in conflict prevention, is a pre-requisite for any successful outcome in this area.

Mobilizing domestic financial resources for development

More than a year after Monterrey, the pledges made at the Conference have yet to be realized. In some regions, development finance is dwindling, developing country debt service levels remain unsustainable and trade barriers impede the free flow of goods

national resource mobilization can be enhanced. Several speakers noted that the desk-work for Monterrey process and the MDGs has been done with substantial progress on strategy, policy implications and reviews. Increasingly, the two, that is Monterrey and MDGs, are being tested by implementation, and by the international community's commitment to share its responsibilities both at the national and international level.

Asymmetries in Globalization

The issue of unequal gains from globalization was underscored by many speakers. The timing and scope of liberalization efforts should be country-specific to bring desired positive results. Equity considerations should remain on the agenda of the post- Monterrey process.

Several delegations though acknowledging the power and contribution of the forces of globalization were of the opinion that the fruits were not justly shared and that additional inequalities were exacerbated in the process. Developed countries were repeatedly disregarding their own exhortations of free trade by both overt and covert protection –especially on agricultural commodities. The small landlocked and island developing countries were particularly neglected and often did not benefit from the globalizing forces of this century.

New proposals

ESCAP has launched the Asian Bond Concept, in an effort to put to good use a fraction of the substantial foreign exchange reserves of the countries in the region. Bonds are issued to finance infrastructure development. Other types of bond issues are being discussed to tap domestic savings to finance small and medium-sized businesses. Debt swaps, where proceeds