Mr. President,

We thank the Secretary General for the comprehensive road map provided by him in the report A/56/326 on the implementation of the Millennium Declaration. It provides a satisfactory analysis of the state of play on the various goals which had been agreed upon a year ago and outlines a large number and wide variety of further steps which can be taken by us. The Secretary General can do no more. The Millennium Declaration can only be implemented by member States.

2. The Millennium Declaration acknowledges the collective responsibility of the international community and identifies key objectives in six broad areas. Of special significance to the majority of the members of the General Assembly are those which are now known as the Millennium Development Goals. These are not new targets which were set by the Millennium Summit. They are targets which derive from the global conferences of the 1990s. The Summit provided an opportunity, and together we chose to exercise it, to reaffirm our shared commitment to the achievement of these goals.

3. We agree with the Secretary General that what is needed now is not any further elaboration of plans of action. This has already been done by the global conferences. The requirement now, as has been pointed out, is to move from an era of commitment to an era of implementation. This cannot, however, happen unless significant additional resources are made available. The Secretary General has noted that there is a special obligation on the more fortunate countries and that wealthier nations must adhere to their promises. He says “those that fail to honour these commitments must realise that they are failing also in the responsibility which they have solemnly recognised, to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level”. We would add that those who dishonour their commitments, must realise that they also dishonour multilateralism, they subtract from its legitimacy and they erode the faith which developing countries have placed in it.

4. It helps to speak with numbers. The over-arching Millennium development goal is to halve the proportion of people living in absolute poverty by 2015. The Rural Poverty Report 2001 of the International Fund for Agricultural Development finds that this goal will not be met. The achievement of this goal requires that 30 million people must escape extreme poverty every year. However, only 10 million are able to do so. This is a finding which predates the terrorist attacks of September 11. These attacks, the World Bank projects, would lead to pulling 10 million people below the absolute poverty line of one dollar a day. In other words, not only is movement towards the over-arching Millennium Development Goal unsatisfactory; there is, in fact, no movement at all.

5. The Millennium Declaration called upon industrialised countries to grant more generous development assistance. This has not been done. The road map, strangely, recommends as a strategy the consideration of steps for making aid programmes more
efficient. This is odd. The way forward has been clearly identified by the Zedillo Panel - it has been translated into the figure of an additional amount of US$ 50 billion every year. The only strategy that is now required is to make the forthcoming International Conference on the Financing for Development a success. Success would mean that the Conference agrees upon specific measures which would ensure the availability of stable and predictable financing for development and poverty eradication. Success would contribute to the achievement of a wide range of other goals as well - from those which relate to reducing the effects of natural disasters to those which deal with peace and security. As we have often said, it is endemic poverty and lack of economic development which constitute the most important factors fueling conflict. With nearly half of the world's population living on less than two dollars a day, we do not have the setting for either social and political stability or for harmony.

6. One of the development goals in which success - albeit, very limited - has been achieved is that which relates to encouraging the pharmaceutical industry to make essential drugs more widely available and affordable by all who need them in developing countries. Manufacturers of HIV related medicines have, as we are aware, agreed to reduce the cost of these medicines by 85 to 90% in some countries. India can rightfully claim credit for this achievement. The United Nations had been discussing this issue with the world's leading pharmaceutical companies for a number of years. That, however, did not yield any result. It was not until generic manufacturers from India placed themselves on the front pages of newspapers all over the world and offered the chance of saving millions of lives, that the multinationals decided to forsake some of their profits. We are happy that the WTO Ministerial declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and public health which was issued last Wednesday has firmly placed public health before patents. Public health problems have also been broadened to include those resulting from HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other epidemics. The success which has been achieved clearly shows that the strategy which we must adopt for moving forward cannot be one based on any expectation of altruism on the part of multinational corporations. It can only be based on the assertion of the right to affordable essential medicines.

7. We had set ourselves the goal of ensuring that the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communication technologies, are available to all. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Secretary General on the establishment of the ICT Task force, which will be holding its inaugural session tomorrow. The Indian experience is confirmation of the role which ICT can play in promoting development. The IT industry in India has registered a compounded annual growth rate of more than 42% over the last five years. Its contribution to our global exports is 14%; this is projected to rise to 35% by 2008. We wholeheartedly endorse the strategy which has been outlined for moving forward through support for human resource development and institutional capacity building. India will be a willing partner in this exercise.

8. The Millennium Declaration had identified “Meeting the Special Needs of Africa” as one of the six key areas requiring our collective commitment. We support the strategies which have been identified in the road map prepared by the Secretary General. It is, however, our firm conviction that there is no need to reinvent the wheel. Africa knows its own problems better than anybody else. It also knows the solutions. These have been articulated clearly by it over the years; most recently in the New African Initiative, now renamed as the New Partnership for Africa's Development, which was adopted by its Heads of State and Government in July 2001. Our strategy for moving forward cannot be a donor
dictated package. What Africa requires, and what is incumbent on the international community in implementation of the Millennium Declaration, is to support Africa in the solutions which it has identified for itself.

9. In the Millennium Declaration we had resolved to take concerted action against international terrorism. The terrible events of September 11 have brought home to us the need for urgency in this action. They have also brought home the realisation of how much of an international phenomena terrorism is and of how it can only be tackled collectively. Security Council resolution 1373 provides a framework for collective and individual action. The strategy for moving forward would be to implement fully the permanent obligations which it lays down for all member States. The early adoption of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism would also be redemption of our pledge in the Millennium Declaration.

10. We had also committed ourselves to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving this aim. This has, in our view, to remain our foremost priority. Our strategies need to be non-discriminatory and transparent and our approach truly multilateral and inclusive if we are to emerge from the shadows of vulnerability and fear into the light of confidence and hope.

11. As an initial step, we had resolved in the Millennium Declaration to consider the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear danger. India, as a responsible nuclear weapon State, brought before the First Committee two weeks ago, as it has over the last four General Assemblies, a resolution on this subject, setting out the strategy for moving forward.

12. We had also resolved to take concerted action to end illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. The Programme of Action adopted by the Conference held last July fell short of our expectations. It needs, however, to be implemented expeditiously and fully as a first step in a multilateral process. The strategy for moving forward would be to build consensus on the issues which remain outstanding, particularly the supply of weapons to non-State actors.

13. Peacekeeping has emerged as one of the most important and visible areas of work of the United Nations. We had, therefore, resolved a year ago to give the UN the resources and tools which it needs for the effective discharge of this function. This is being done. We had, in addition, in the Millennium Declaration, also agreed to consider expeditiously the recommendations of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. We had done so because we knew that the endemic problems which plague UN peacekeeping cannot be resolved through the mere infusion of additional resources. India’s experience of almost five decades in 35 of the 54 UN peacekeeping operations leads us to the conclusion that the lessons of Somalia and Sierra Leone have to be learnt if peacekeeping is to be reformed. A principal lesson is that a genuine and meaningful partnership between the Security Council, the Troop Contributing Countries and the Secretariat is essential. We have, in the appropriate forum, elaborated on how this partnership should be developed, and on the mechanism through which it can be implemented.

14. We resolved, at the Millennium Summit, to intensify our efforts to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. We know that, even as the Open-ended Working Group completes eight years of work, there is a need to persevere and
not be disillusioned by the slow progress which has been made so far. We need to bear in mind, though, that the legitimacy and the credibility of the decisions of the Security Council have and will be questioned if it is not made more representative of the wider membership.

15. In the brief time which is allotted to each delegation, it is only possible to touch on some of the issues which need to be raised in this debate. The issues which I have highlighted today, in our view, are among those which merit the most urgent consideration by this Assembly. I must add, however, that India will participate constructively in the implementation of all the commitments contained in the Millennium Declaration.