FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

JOINT MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE
OF THE
BOARDS OF GOVERNORS OF THE BANK AND THE FUND
ON THE
TRANSFER OF REAL RESOURCES TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE COMMUNIQUE

1. As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Bretton Woods Institutions and approach the fifth anniversary of the U.N. Millennium Declaration, we recommit ourselves to supporting efforts by developing countries to pursue sustainable growth, sound macroeconomic policies, debt sustainability, open trade, job creation, poverty reduction and good governance. These actions need to be reinforced by stronger international action and partnerships, including reforming trade, more and more effective aid and stronger private flows in order to make progress on the Millennium Development Goals[1]. We remain concerned that most MDGs will not be met by most developing countries.

2. Global economic growth is strong, supported by exceptionally robust growth in developing countries, as the world benefits from the significant reforms undertaken by many countries over recent years. Private sector driven growth resulting in new jobs and higher tax revenues, which can be used to finance poverty-reducing public expenditures, is critical to the success of country-led efforts to reduce global poverty. Success in the Doha Development Agenda can only complement these developments and we stress the importance of translating the recently agreed WTO frameworks into tangible results. We urge all countries, developing and developed, to participate fully in the negotiations and urge the IMF and World Bank to continue to support work to this end, and to help developing countries assess the impact and to provide additional support to address potential adjustment costs.

3. To help developing countries take advantage of the new opportunities that can arise from a better economic setting and to strengthen the foundations for economic growth, we welcome the renewed focus being given by the World Bank Group to private sector development, improving the investment climate and strengthening financial sectors, and urge the Bank to continue to translate this into country operations. Complementing macroeconomic stability, capacity building and a greater results focus in public services and institutions and improving the quality of governance, successful private sector investment, social development as well as gender equality are key to accelerating pro-poor growth. We note the important role played

[1] As endorsed by Heads of State and Government in the U.N. General Assembly on September 8, 2000.

by remittances in this context. We urge the Bank to intensify its analytical work on the potential sources of growth and ways to mobilize them and to help countries build the relevant analytical capacity.

4. Strengthening the foundations for growth will also critically depend on addressing large infrastructure needs in many countries. We welcome the Bank Group's plans to scale-up activities in implementing the Infrastructure Action Plan and urge accelerated support of country efforts in accordance with the Bank's safeguards. We emphasized the importance of addressing maintenance and other costs to ensure the sustainability of infrastructure investments. We also stressed the need to pursue—together with the IMF—efforts to increase fiscal space for public infrastructure investments within limits of fiscal prudence and debt sustainability. We also endorse further Bank engagement to meet infrastructure needs at the regional and sub-sovereign levels, enhancing application of risk mitigation instruments, and continuing efforts to offer a more complete and seamless client product line across the World Bank Group; accordingly, we urge the Bank to present options to its Board to move this agenda forward concretely. These actions will be particularly important in enhancing the Bank's support for development in middle-income countries, as well as in low-income countries.

5. These and other actions required to lay the basis for sustained stronger growth are critical to our ability to achieve the MDGs, as is progress in providing effective health systems (in particular tackling HIV/AIDS, malaria and other communicable diseases), education for all and other basic social services. We noted the special needs of low-income countries under stress (LICUS) , where technical assistance is especially necessary to strengthen weak policies and institutions. We look forward to reviewing progress in all these areas in the second Global Monitoring Report at our next meeting.

6. We agree that reform efforts in developing countries must be supported by improved aid effectiveness, increased aid and other financial flows, and coherent policies to achieve development results. The international community has agreed to harmonize and align their support behind country-owned development strategies, streamline the use of conditionality, increase the focus on results, and use country systems where appropriate. We are committed to using the Second High-Level Forum on Harmonization in Paris next spring to translate these agreements into clear and specific commitments and timetables and call for the development of indicators and benchmarks to monitor the participation of all partners in this effort at the country level.

7. We must also enhance our efforts to help developing countries build capacity and address absorptive capacity constraints. We welcome the progress achieved to date in implementing the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) process as indicated in recent independent evaluations. We note the important challenges that remain in implementing the approach fully and effectively both at the country level and in the Bank and Fund and among other development partners, and welcome the revisions to the PRS architecture to help achieve this. One area which deserves closer attention in next year's PRS report is the continued efforts by the Bank and Fund to streamline their aggregate conditionality. We also call on the Bank to review its own policy and practice on conditionality and report at our meeting in Fall 2005.

8. The provision of additional, predictable and timely financial assistance to countries committed to sound policies, remains a critical issue, particularly for sub-Saharan Africa. We urge those donors, who have not yet done so, to make concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7 percent of GNP as ODA. We welcome the progress announced by some countries, including, in some cases, the setting of clear timetables to achieve this objective. We also reaffirm our commitment to a substantial and timely replenishment of IDA, recognizing the critical timetable to reach the MDGs.

9. To address the needs for additional stable and predictable financing to help developing countries undertake ambitious investment plans to meet the MDGs and to finance associated recurrent costs where appropriate, we reviewed proposals to complement increased aid flows and commitments with innovative mechanisms. We welcomed the World Bank and IMF analysis of these options, notably the International Finance Facility, global taxes and voluntary contributions, including the analysis of their technical feasibility. We also took note of the international meeting on Action Against Hunger and Poverty convened by President Lula on September 20th 2004 in New York. We ask the Bank and the Fund to continue their work and report at the next meeting on how to take such options forward. We also encourage the Bank to explore the potential for increasing leverage through blending aid with other flows, including MDB lending.

10. Debt sustainability is an essential underpinning for growth. We reviewed progress under the enhanced HIPC Initiative, welcomed the recent decision to extend the sunset clause and urged full creditor participation. We welcome the development of a forward-looking debt sustainability framework that aims to help low-income countries manage their borrowings and avoid a buildup of unsustainable debt, while pursuing the MDGs. We stressed the need to provide resources to low-income countries on appropriate terms, including the degree of concessionality and level of grant financing. We look forward to further work on the remaining issues by the Bank and the Fund to make the framework operational as soon as possible. We underscore the need for joint Bank/Fund Debt Sustainability Analyses (DSAs) (based on a clear division of labor) to provide countries, and their development partners, with clear and coherent analysis and guidance. We also urge the Bank and the Fund to accelerate their work on means to help mitigate the impact of exogenous shocks on low-income countries and to report to their Boards at an early date.

11. We also reviewed reports from our Boards with respect to their work on enhancing the voice and participation of developing and transition countries in our institutions. This work takes place within a broader context of reflections on how best to address governance issues within the international community. We welcomed the progress to date in making Bank and Fund operations more responsive to borrowers' needs. We urge the Boards to cooperate closely together in exploring all relevant options and to strive to achieve consensus amongst all members. We look forward to receiving a report regarding the feasibility of these options, to allow us to address the necessary political decisions at our next meeting.

12. The next meeting of the Committee will be held in Washington, D.C., on April 17, 2005.