



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MOURAD BENMEHIDI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ALGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE 50TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (New York, 1 February 2012)

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Allow me to extend, on behalf of the Group, our warmest congratulations to you and the Bureau on your election to the 50th session of the Commission for Social Development. The Group of 77 and China wishes to assure you of its full support and cooperation.

2. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his informative reports under this agenda item.

3. The Group of 77 and China wishes also to stress the timely discussion of the priority theme of this session, which intervenes in the middle of the ongoing preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012. We firmly believe that "Rio-plus-20" Summit will provide a useful opportunity to strengthen the social development pillar in general and the eradication of poverty in particular.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Poverty eradication is one of the three mutually reinforcing and interdependent pillars of social development as identified more than seventeen years ago at the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995. The Group of 77 and China is deeply concerned that the number of people living below poverty line in the world still surpasses one billion and with less than five years remaining for the deadline of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), MDG 1 of eradication of extreme poverty and hunger remains one of the most challenging goals to attain. In this context, the Group reaffirms its strong commitment to continue implementing the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action and the further initiatives for Social Development adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-fourth special session. The Group also recognizes that the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments and the attainment of the Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IADGs), including the Millennium Development Goals, are mutually reinforcing and that the Copenhagen commitments are crucial to a coherent, people-centered approach to development.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Despite some progress made in reducing poverty in some regions, we still have a long winding path to total eradication of poverty which poses itself as a most complex issue, with interplay of economic, political, social and historical factors. In this context, the Group of 77 and China is seriously concerned about the current multiple, interrelated crises and challenges, such as the ongoing financial and economic crisis, the food crisis and continuing food insecurity, volatile energy and commodity prices and climate change, which had exacerbated the already dire situation of global poverty reduction and could further undermine the achievement of the Internationally Agreed

Development Goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Chairman,

6. The Group of 77 and China continues to underscore the importance of addressing the main impediments to eradication of poverty, namely unemployment, inequality, conflicts, instability, family disintegration, armed conflicts which are persistently impeding the avenues for development and growth for large segments of populations in the developing world.

7. We fully share the view that for economic growth to contribute to poverty reduction, it is essential that macroeconomic and social policies should focus on job creation, reducing inequalities and providing social protection. Furthermore, as mentioned in the conclusion of the Secretary General's report on the priority theme, investing in agriculture, rural development and climate change adaptation and mitigation are also necessary to improve food security and reduce poverty. We also firmly believe that alleviation of poverty requires a development oriented strategy focused on building rural infrastructure, bolstering income and basic services such as medical care and insurance and investment in education. We also believe that it is essential to redouble efforts to ensure that all segments of society, including youth, the elderly and persons with disability had access to resources and opportunities.

Mr. Chairman,

8. Since the proclamation of the International Year of the Family in 1994, the international community has undertaken a range of activities and commitments in support of its objectives. Further efforts and initiatives of Governments, the United Nations system and civil society are necessary to ensure the further promotion and continuous implementation of the mandated objectives of the International Year of the Family. The preparation for and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014 provide a useful opportunity to draw further attention to the objectives of the year for increasing cooperation at all levels on family issues and for undertaking concerted actions to strengthen family-centred policies and programmes as part of an integrated comprehensive approach to development. In this context, the Group of 77 and China will present a draft resolution on the preparation for and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family to set the grounds for the preparations of this important anniversary.

9. Population ageing is another issue of global concern that requires concerted, well focused and forward looking policies at all levels. The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to the issues of elderly people which not only face discrimination on the basis of age, but are impacted by forms of discrimination, poverty and violence, as well as lack of specific services and resources. The implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action is seminal and we hope that this session will contribute to discuss the most appropriate ways and means of achieving the development, well-being and full enjoyment of all human rights of older persons and to set the grounds for the preparation of the upcoming second review and appraisal of the implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing.

10. The Group of 77 and China welcomes the outcome document of the UN High-level Meeting on Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding held on 25 and 26 July 2011 and call upon Member States, the UN system and relevant stakeholders to fully address all current challenges affecting youth.

11. We also welcome the proclamation of the year 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives

and call on all Member States, as well as the United Nations and all relevant stakeholders to take advantage of the International Year of Cooperatives as a way of promoting cooperatives and raising awareness of their contribution to social and economic development through eradication of poverty and to share good practices on the implementation of the activities carried out during the Year.

12. The Group of 77 and China notes with great concern that persons with disabilities, who face a greater risk of living in absolute poverty, make up an estimated 15 per cent of the world's population, of whom 80 per cent live in developing countries. The High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly which will be held during its sixty-eighth session on the Realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other Internationally Agreed Development Goals for persons with disabilities will provide an invaluable opportunity to consider a global strategy towards 2015 and beyond for mainstreaming disability in the development agenda.

13. The Group of 77 and China would like to stress once again the importance of removing obstacles to the realization of the right of peoples to self-determination, in particular of peoples living under colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation, which adversely affect their social and economic development.

Mr. Chairman,

14. The Group, furthermore, would like to emphasize the need for a strengthened and scaled-up global partnership for eradication of poverty, based on the recognition of national leadership and ownership of development strategies. In this context, international cooperation must be enhanced, including fulfillment of commitment of internationally agreed official development assistance, debt relief, market access, capacity-building and technical support, including technology transfer.

15. In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China looks forward to having a successful session with a productive outcome that contributes to achieving the goal of poverty eradication.

I thank you.