



**STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. ALTIGANI SALIH FIDAIL, MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN, AT THE ASSUMPTION OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE GROUP OF 77 FOR 2009 BY THE REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN (NEW YORK, 23 JANUARY 2009)
(New York, 23 January 2009)**

- Honourable outgoing Chair of the Group of 77,
- Mr. President of the General Assembly,
- Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations,
- Mme. Deputy Secretary-General,
- Mr. Under-Secretary-General and Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme,
- Mr. Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs,
- Mr. Executive Secretary of the Group of 77,
- Excellencies,
- Distinguished Delegates,

1. It is an honour and a privilege for me to accept, on behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of the Sudan, the mantle of the G-77 Chairmanship for this year. I would like to extend our sincere thanks and gratitude for the members of the African Group for their valuable support and endorsement, as well as the entire membership of the G-77 and China for the confidence and trust reposed on my country to serve the Group and represent the development agenda of the South. This is no doubt a tremendous task and challenging responsibility which my country undertakes with deep sense of humility and commitment, coupled with our strong determination, in full transparency and inclusiveness, to defend the interests, objectives and aspirations of our Group which represents the overwhelming majority of countries in the United Nations, and which grew over the years as a formidable negotiating bloc. You can rest assured that the Sudan as the chair country will spare no effort in ensuring that we collectively achieve the desired objectives guided by the ideals and principles of our Group, and its abiding commitment to multilateralism and a just, equitable and non-discriminatory international economic and social order.

2. While assuming this important responsibility, allow me to take this opportunity to pay special tribute to Antigua and Barbuda for its outstanding stewardship of the G-77 in 2008, with skill, passion and persistence. We extend our profound appreciation to its esteemed Government and its delegation here in New York led by H.E. Ambassador John W. Ashe for their tireless efforts in advancing the interests of the Group and for the achievements made through numerous deliberations and negotiations.

3. I would like also to welcome the benign presence in our midst of the Honourable President of the General Assembly Father Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, our UN Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon and other distinguished guests. Your participation, Excellencies, underscores our shared commitment and common vision which is to strengthen and advance the economic and development role of the United Nations as key Charter objectives. The priorities of peace and development as two sides of a coin has repeatedly been established by the Group of 77 and China.

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4. The assumption by the Sudan of the G-77 Chairmanship happily coincides with the 45th anniversary this year of the establishment of the Group in June 1964. The formation of the Group was a demonstration by developing countries of their determination to collectively overcome marginalization and to ensure a better life for our people premised on the centrality of realizing a just and equitable global economic order. It was a manifestation of our common desire to bring a change in an inequitable system born out of the colonial era. Looking back to almost half a century since its inception, the underlying rationale that inspired the creation of the Group has remained unchanged, indeed has become all the more relevant and vital, as vividly reconfirmed by current scenarios and developments. In confronting the profound challenges of today, the Group is blessed with its potential along with its strong unity of purpose. The vision of my country, itself a microcosm of the Group in composition and diversity, is to preserve and strengthen the unity, cohesion and solidarity of the Group in order that it pursue its responsibilities in the interest and benefit of millions of our peoples around the globe.

5. While celebrating its 45th anniversary, the Group renews once again, that economic and social development should be the centerpiece of the objectives and operational activities of the United Nations. The achievement of the internationally agreed development goals including the Millennium Development Goals, should continue to be the over-arching framework of the development activities of the UN system. While challenged by a multiple inter-related and mutually reinforcing crises, including the financial crisis, global food crisis, climate change, drought, desertification and the loss of biological diversity and environmental crisis as well as the crisis of confidence in some international institutions, all of which the Group will continue to tackle in 2009, it is the lack of effective implementation of the internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs that remains the Achilles Heel of the UN development agenda. That is why securing the effective and full implementation of the agreed goals and commitments, including in development assistance, external debt, market access, technology transfer and other areas of cooperation, must be of the highest priority, while the creation of a development monitoring mechanism has become all the more an imperative. And while emphasizing the need for strengthened global partnership for development based on the recognition of the national leadership and ownership of development strategies, it is the firm position of the Group that the special challenges and needs of the most vulnerable countries should be addressed, including countries in Africa, Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Land-locked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small-Island Developing States (SIDS).

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6. Our agenda for 2009 is indeed extensive and demanding. As challenging as it is, it however offers our Group an opportunity to shape decisions and policies and secure its interests on critical issues guided by our shared objectives and reinforced by the Group's rich legacy and ideals.

7. Today, we are faced with what is described as the worst international financial crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. This has led to the further marginalization of developing countries, hitting hardest the most vulnerable. The global economic and financial forecast presents a gloomy picture as it reveals that the financial crisis could further intensify, and economic growth could slow dramatically. The economic landscape of developing countries is uncertain due to the global financial turmoil and its impact on their economic growth. We are now certain that there is a real risk that this global recession could be the most severe due to its combined drastic effects at a time when 1.4 billion people who live on the verge of extreme poverty are all in the developing world.

8. The current economic crisis, as the Group has consistently maintained, is essentially a

development challenge which emanated fundamentally from the incoherence and failure of the international system that has even failed to predict this crisis. Indeed, the world's economic growth has deteriorated substantially and a serious global recession is affecting particularly our countries. Sudan will build up on the Group's achievements and continue to steer our common efforts towards addressing these challenges.

9. Beyond emergency solutions, we should strive to ensure that all countries can participate in the global economy and reap equitable benefits from their participation. In this endeavour, the United Nations, as a multilateral institution has to play a central role. In our view, only when the developed and developing countries act in the spirit of equitable partnership the global, economic, social and environmental problems of our time would be effectively addressed. There is a need for a vigorous coordinated international global response in order to ensure that the sustained growth of the world economy and the development efforts of developing countries are not severely affected. We need a joint multilateral effort and active policy coordination to deal with these crises and avoid the deterioration of our economies. In this connection, our Group should firmly consolidate its common position to address all these challenges while engaging actively in the preparations of the high-level UN conference on the financial crisis and the reform of the international financial architecture.

10. In this regard, the recent decision taken at the Doha Review Conference on Financing for Development regarding the holding of a high-level conference on the financial crisis is a welcome initiative. We need to make every effort to utilize this opportunity to address all issues including those systemic in nature in relation to the current financial crisis. The Group also looks forward to working actively with all our development partners to ensure the full and effective implementation of the commitments made in the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development including the provision of building a more effective intergovernmental structure to carry out the follow-up of the FfD, which is to be examined during the substantive session of ECOSOC as well as the forthcoming General Assembly session.

11. The global food crisis poses a serious challenge to the fight against poverty and hunger, as well as to the efforts by developing countries to attain food security and achieve the objectives of halving the number of undernourished people by 2015 and other internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. The global food crisis has multiple and complex causes requiring a comprehensive, coordinated and sustained response in the short, medium, and long-term by the international community and national governments. Underscoring its severity and urgency, the Chair intends to initiate follow-up action in this regard to address the challenges of the global food crisis and its impact on developing countries.

12. We are committed to work with our development partners to advance the development agenda and the eradication of poverty. It is our belief that the eradication of poverty in the world is not only an issue of importance for developing countries but also a matter of our collective global interest. This means that the G-77 and China needs to continue strengthening the ability of the United Nations to build international consensus and at the same time encourage our development partners to support and fully implement the various aspects and commitments of the development agenda.

13. Climate change is a global challenge that requires the widest cooperation and commitment within the framework of common but differentiated responsibilities. In this context, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto protocol remains the central multilateral framework for cooperative action to address climate change and financing of climate-related actions should be guided by the relevant provisions of the Convention. This is no

doubt the most critical year for climate change. Our negotiations from Bali through Poznan leading up to Copenhagen at the end of 2009 for a new international agreement requires the continued vigilance and unity of our Group as we prepare for these critical negotiations.

14. Our Group has repeatedly expressed its serious concern over the continued failure of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations as well as the importance of eliminating trade distorting subsidies by developed countries and the need to facilitate the accession of all developing countries, particularly the LDCs, that apply for membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) without political conditionalities.

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15. At this critical historical juncture, South-South cooperation acquires its profound importance as a vital expression of South-South solidarity born out of shared experiences and sympathies. While preparing for the high-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, our Group has repeatedly stressed that South-South cooperation and its agenda must be driven by the countries of the South and that it should not be a replacement of North-South cooperation. Furthermore, it should not be analyzed and evaluated using the same standards as those used for North-South relations since South-South cooperation is a development agenda based on premises, conditions and objectives that are specific to the historic and political context of developing countries and to their needs and expectations.

16. The United Nations High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation scheduled to take place this year is yet another major event which provides our Group an occasion to maximize the potentialities and complementarities of the South as well as other development opportunities among developing countries. In this regard, our Group will continue to enhance our collective self-reliance by broadening and intensifying South-South cooperation including triangular cooperation along with convening sectoral meetings as mandated by the South Summit.

17. As a major event in the programme of work of our Group for 2009, the First Ministerial Forum on Water which will be held in Muscat from 23 to 25 February 2009 at the kind invitation and generous support of the Sultanate of Oman. This important gathering, which is convened in accordance with previous ministerial mandates, constitutes an occasion to address the common challenges and strategies for the management of water resources, with a special focus on the promotion of the exchange of scientific and technological know-how and the sharing of experiences and best practices among developing countries. I would like to take this opportunity to make an appeal to delegations who have not yet confirmed their participation to do so at the earliest possible and to participate actively in the Forum.

18. Another valuable opportunity to advance the Group's solidarity will be the convening of the First Ministerial Forum on Sports, Culture and Development to be held this year. As the Chair country of the Group of 77, Sudan will work tirelessly to strengthen, apart from economic and development issues, the bonds and our people-to-people contacts in such important areas of culture and sports within a developmental perspective.

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19. It is also necessary to maintain our vigilance on issues which our countries regard as major priorities such as the follow-up to the major UN Conferences and Summits, the strengthening of the

UN development architecture and UN reforms. We will also have before us at the 64th session of the General Assembly the Secretary-General's budget proposals for the biennium 2010-2011. Collectively, we must ensure that programmes and activities of particular interests to developing countries are accorded the appropriate resources necessary for their full implementation in accordance with their respective mandates.

20. In this context also, our Group will continue to pay special attention to ensure that the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations is rationalized and that the financial resources provided by Member States to implement the mandates and programmes are not wasted and are properly utilized. As the General Assembly will approve a new scale of assessments, the Group as in the past should continue to accord necessary attention to this important matter guided by the principle of "capacity to pay" as the fundamental criterion in the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations.

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21. The challenges are indeed many. In these endeavours, the Group will continue to work closely with the Non-Aligned Movement through the Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) to reinforce our positions and interests on all issues of common interest and concern for the developing countries. Similarly, we will strive to foster cooperation and coordination with the various Chapters of the Group of 77 and various UN entities. Meanwhile, I can assure you that we will continue to safeguard the interests of the Group of 77 and China by consolidating and protecting the well-established Group values and positions which are vital to our collective interests as we navigate through these challenging times. In this regard, we are confident that the required cooperation and solidarity will be extended by all members. We look forward to and welcome the support and cooperation of the various agencies and institutions.

22. In conclusion, I would like to thank our small but efficient secretariat led by the Executive Secretary of the Group of 77 Mr. Mourad Ahmia. We certainly look forward to working with them throughout this critical year in order to achieve the Group's objectives.

Thank you.
Muchas gracias.