



STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. JOHN W ASHE, AMBASSADOR/PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA AT THE OPENING OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING OF THE UNDP/UNFPA, FIRST REGULAR SESSION 2009 (New York, 19 January 2009)

Mr. President,
Mr. Administrator,
Members of the Executive Board,
Distinguished colleagues,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. At the outset Mr. President, let me extend, on behalf of my delegation and the Members of the Group of 77 and China, heartiest congratulations on your election to the Presidency of the Board and to the four vice-presidents. We look forward to working with you through the year, and we are confident in your stewardship and that you will successfully lead the Board throughout 2009.
2. Allow me to also take this opportunity to thank the UNDP Administrator, Mr. Kemal Dervis, for his presentation on the organization's financial, budgetary and administrative matters. We have come to expect a very thorough and detailed assessment of the organization's work from the Administrator. This is indeed a seminal presentation as it is his final as Administrator of the UNDP.
3. Mr. Administrator during your tenure at the helm of the organization we looked to you as a friend of developing countries and considered you a vital partner in the fight against poverty and hunger and instrumental to helping us achieve sustainable development. We do hope that this will not change with your departure. The G-77 and China hopes to continue the spirit of constructive engagement with the organization, the Board and with all our development partners as a means of improving coordination and cooperation and for greater development effectiveness.
4. Mr. President, the Group takes this opportunity to reiterate the importance of the work of UNDP within the UN development system and at the country level to bring about real progress in human development. The work of the organization is vital to achieve sustainable human development and the internationally-agreed development goals, including the MDGs.
5. We are however, extremely concerned by the growing tendency on the part of some members of the Board to politicize the work of the UNDP. The Group of 77 and China has consistently stated that development assistance should not be used as a tool for political means. Yet we are quite troubled by the continued insistence on the politicization of the organization's work through actions that are clearly destructive to the work of the Executive Board. This was most recently illustrated in the pre-sessional meeting to elect the bureau of the Board on 9 January.
6. Certain members remain intent on impeding the effectiveness of the work of the Board, which shows scant regard for the tenets of neutrality and impartiality of development assistance. It also shows scant regard for allowing the Board to govern and guide the organization in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.
7. UNDP operates in a complex and diverse international environment with multiple and multi-faceted challenges to development at all levels. We must continue to recognize this in the make-up

of the Bureau and the Board. The organization continues to face increasing demands for development assistance and effectiveness in carrying out its mandate. We should therefore not be wasting time on political shenanigans in the Board.

8. Mr. President, in September last year the Executive Board approved an accountability framework and oversight policy. Our objective was for a strong and strict policy that would act as an incentive for the organization to pursue with renewed vigor the principles of accountability, and to prevent politically motivated selections of audit reports for disclosure, respect confidential documents and encourage respect for the principle of confidentiality. The decision we negotiated (2008/37) is detailed and specific in the requirements for disclosure. Yet disclosures were made following a request which was not in compliance with the decision. We emphasize that Board decisions should be respected and strictly adhered to.

9. This is a very serious issue and we urge UNDP and all Board Members to respect the decisions that have been taken by the Board and to ensure their implementation to the fullest extent. If requests for audit reports persists and disclosures continue to be made not in compliance with Executive Board decisions, then it is the duty of the Board to take further measures to address the issue.

10. In conclusion Mr. President, I wish you a successful presidency, and you can continue to count on the Group for support throughout the rest of your presidency.

Thank you.