



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY DR. HAJRA TARIQ AZIZ, MEMBER NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN ON AGENDA ITEM 57: GROUPS OF COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS AND ITS SUB-ITEMS (A) AND (B), IN THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 62ND GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 5 November 2007)

Madam Chairperson,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 57 (a & b): Groups of Countries in Special Situations.

2. Let me first turn to Agenda Item 59 (a): Third UN Conference on Least Developed Countries.

3. We thank the Secretary General for the Annual Progress Report on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the Decade 2001-2010 (BPOA).

4. The Report contains useful information on the results achieved and the challenges and difficulties encountered by the LDCs. Unfortunately, the report does not adequately address the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action by our development partners particularly the results achieved by them through the fulfillment of their commitments.

5. Last year, the General Assembly undertook the mid term comprehensive review of the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action. During the review process, the Group of 77 and China had time and again noted with concern that the progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action had been insufficient and uneven. If the current trend persists, very few LDCs will be in a position to meet the objectives, goals and targets of the Programme of Action. A year down the road, the Secretary General's report enumerates a similar trend, which is a source of serious concern.

6. The Group of 77 and China would, therefore, reiterate that full and timely implementation of the seven commitments must be adhered to, if the LDCs were to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

Madam Chair,

7. The LDCs have made tremendous efforts to build an enabling national environment for the implementation of the Programme of Action. The voluntary presentations made by a number of developing countries including four LDCs at the first ECOSOC Annual Ministerial Review on their national development strategies to pursue sustained economic growth and sustainable development further confirms their seriousness to fulfill the commitments that they have made. The support from the development partners in terms of fulfilling their commitments made in the BPOA is unfortunately inadequate and at times lacking completely.

8. The Group of 77 hopes that the international community will draw upon the results of the mid term review and address the challenges that have been identified by the LDCs themselves as contained in the Cotonou Strategy for the further implementation of the BPOA. We remain

convinced that this strategy can effectively contribute to the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action in a timely manner. We, therefore, call upon the Member States, UN organizations as well other relevant entities to implement the recommendations as contained in the 'Cotonou Strategy'.

9. This will require the development partners to fully and in a timely manner implement their commitments to LDCs including significant efforts, from donors that have not yet done so, to achieve the ODA target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their gross national product for the LDCs by 2010.

10. It is also critical that development partners support the implementation of the transition strategy of countries graduating from the list of Least Developed Countries to avoid any abrupt disruption in their development process.

11. The Group of 77 and China would also like to reiterate the critical importance of the participation of the LDCs in the annual review of the Programme of Action by ECOSOC. Despite contributions by many donors, the non mobilization of needed resources and their unpredictability does not so far allow adequate representation of LDCs in the ECOSOC substantive sessions. Therefore, we underscore the importance of ensuring such participation from the regular budget of the United Nations.

Madam Chair,

12. The Brussels Programme of Action has invited the General Assembly to consider holding a fourth UN Conference on LDCs towards the end of the decade, in order to make a comprehensive appraisal of the implementation of this programme and to decide on subsequent action. We call upon the international community to begin the process for successfully holding the fourth UN Conference on the LDCs.

13. A coordinated action from the UN and its agencies, funds and programmes, we believe, should be able to make an important contribution to this effort aimed at enhancing the support for the Least Developed Countries.

14. Let me now turn to Agenda item 57(b) on Specific actions relating to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation.

15. We would like to express our gratitude to the Secretary General for his report A/62/226 on the status of preparations for the midterm review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

16. The Report provides valuable information on the progress made in the preparations for the mid-term review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

17. The Group of 77 and China attaches high importance to the Mid-Term Review. We look forward to a series of meetings as part of a High Level Plenary Meeting in October 2008 in New York on the margins of the 63rd UN General Assembly Session devoted to carrying out the Review.

18. We trust that the Review would provide the international community with an opportunity to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the progress made, lessons learned and constraints encountered in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. The occasion, we trust,

would also provide an opportunity to agree on what needs to be done to further galvanize global partnerships to assist landlocked developing countries in their effective participation in ensuring international trade and world economy. We look forward to a positive and negotiated outcome of the meeting.

Madam Chair,

19. The General Assembly adopted the Almaty Programme of Action in 2003 in the context of the serious limitations encountered by the landlocked developing countries on their socio-economic development caused by the lack of territorial access to sea and remoteness from world markets. Unfortunately, despite some advancement in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, several inadequacies still remain. Importantly, the landlocked countries continue to face problems arising from the lack of satisfactory transit transport infrastructure and cumbersome procedures and regulations.

20. The Group of 77 and China calls on the donor countries and multilateral and regional financial and development institutions, to provide landlocked and transit developing countries with appropriate technical and financial assistance in the form of grants or concessionary loans for the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. Special focus of this technical and financial assistance must be on the construction, maintenance and improvement of the transport, storage and other transit-related facilities, including alternative routes and improved communications, to promote sub-regional, regional and inter-regional projects and programmes.

21. Multilateral institutions must amplify their efforts to encourage public and private-sector investment in the transit transport infrastructure development in landlocked developing countries by means of inter alia, investment guarantee schemes.

22. We also call upon donor countries and the international financial and development institutions to make voluntary contributions to the trust fund established by the Secretary General to support the activities related to the follow-up to the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

Madam Chair,

23. The 2005 World Summit Outcome reiterated the commitment by the world leaders to assist landlocked developing countries through the full and effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. We do hope that the mid-term review would provide an opportunity to live up to the commitments made by our leaders at the Summit. In this regard, we urge the High Representatives of the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS to complete at the earliest his work on the development of acceptable set of indicators and benchmarks to effectively monitor the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

24. Before concluding, let me stress that the G-77 and China favours considering the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in the context of the achievement of Internationally Agreed Development Goals and not just the Millennium Development Goals.

I thank you Madam Chair.