



STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY AMBASSADOR JORGE ARGÜELLO, ON BEHALF OF HIS EXCELLENCY MR. HÉCTOR TIMERMAN, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND WORSHIP OF ARGENTINA, CHAIR COUNTRY OF THE GROUP OF 77 FOR 2011, AT THE HANDOVER CEREMONY OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE GROUP OF 77 (New York, 11 January 2012)

Honourable
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Algeria,
Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Mr. President of the Economic and Social Council,
Mr. Representative of the President of the General Assembly,
Mr. Executive Secretary of the Group of 77
Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,

1. Allow me to begin by wishing you all a happy and prosperous New Year. A year ago, in January 2011, my country Argentina had the honour and the privilege of taking over the Chairmanship of the Group of 77 for 2011. We accepted that great honour with a deep sense of pride and determination to serve the common interests of the developing community. Today, at the end of the journey we took along together, we are here to hand over the helm and the torch to its next bearer, Algeria.
2. Throughout 2011, there have been intense and lengthy negotiations with the development partners which resulted in positive outcomes for our Group. This has been due to the solidarity and collective spirit of our Members to articulate and promote our common interests and enhance our joint negotiating capacity on all major issues. Our Group developed and maintained coordinated positions which advanced substantially the interests of developing countries in all the various processes.
3. In addition, our Group continued to tackle a number of multilateral issues, including UN reform, economic and social development, sustainable development, implementation of commitments and actions to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as the Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IAGs), among others. We continued to stress the fundamental importance of a central role for developing countries in any international discussions and policy-making impacting development. In this context, we have constantly emphasized that the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions (BWIs) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), must translate all commitments made at the major United Nations Conferences and Summits in the economic, social and related fields into action.
4. We have continued to call for concerted multilateral action to achieve the Internationally Agreed Development Goals, including the MDGs, as a means towards solving economic and social problems and promoting peace and security. We have also called for the creation of an enabling international economic environment in order to support developing countries efforts to achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development, especially considering the global financial and economic crisis that had compromised the development efforts of developing countries.
5. The Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries held in Istanbul, Turkey, in May 2011 was one major opportunity for our Group to recall the crucial role to be played

by developed countries as "development partners" in terms of investment in physical and human capital, reducing poverty and promoting growth and sustainable development in LDCs. On this occasion, we have emphasized the need for a greater commitment from the North as well as the support of the United Nations system in this process.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

6. At the Special High-Level Meeting of ECOSOC with the BWI in March 2011, we once again emphasized the importance of addressing the critical issues vital for developing countries namely the ongoing financial and economic crisis which affects ODA, debt, trade, poverty and the reform of the international financial institutions. The Annual Ministerial Review of the ECOSOC focused its debate last year on implementing the Internationally Agreed Development Goals in regard to education. In this context, we reaffirmed the importance of education as a powerful tool to promote social inclusion and the need for our populations to access quality educations.
7. Poverty is still a major challenge for developing countries, especially the most challenged among them. While recognizing that some progress was made, much more needs to be done. As it has been stressed for a long time, poverty eradication cannot be successfully achieved without the collective commitment and efforts of the international community. Therefore, international cooperation based on the recognition of national leadership and ownership of development strategies must be enhanced, including fulfillment of the commitment to the internationally agreed official development assistance, debt relief, market-access, capacity-building and technical support.
8. As we all know, international trade is a precious engine for development and sustained economic growth. In this context, we have stressed the right for developing countries to fully utilize their policy space consistent with WTO commitments and seeking a special and preferential treatment to be established to developing countries granting of favourable trade conditions.
9. We underlined the importance of UNCTAD XII, in particular "The Accra Accord", which reiterated UNCTAD's importance as the focal point within the UN for the integrated treatment of trade and development and the interrelated issues of finance, investment, technology and sustainable development, and the need to fully implement its mandate for policy analysis and policy advice which is indispensable for forging consensus building on development. We look forward to the concrete and successful convening of UNCTAD XIII from 21 to 26 April 2012 in Doha, Qatar, as well as its preparatory meetings.
10. The Group made substantive progress coordinating issues related to oceans and the Law of the Sea, bearing in mind pre-existing internal positions. For the first time ever, our Group could agree on a common stance on "oceans" with a view to the important process leading to Rio + 20 in June 2012.
11. In this context, biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction is another area in which the Group promoted successfully a General Assembly resolution leading to the further implementation of the Law of the Sea Convention in the area of marine genetic resources in the high seas and the International Seabed Area.
12. During the various High-level Meetings of the General Assembly, our Group succeeded in advancing the interest of developing countries in sensitive issues such as non-communicable diseases, desertification and youth, enhancing in every case the level of international support to our Group's priorities.

13. In the budget related area of the Organization, our Group successfully achieved some important gains during very difficult negotiations. We all know the arduous outcome and compromises reached on important issues such as troop costs and the regular budget for the biennium 2012-2013.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

14. South-South Cooperation and its agenda is critical for developing countries and must be driven by the countries of the South. The importance of strengthening South-South cooperation, especially in the current international economic environment, was recently reaffirmed by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 who met in New York on 23 September 2011 on the sidelines of the General Assembly. The Ministers reiterated their support for South-South cooperation as a strategy to sustain the development efforts of developing countries and also reiterated the frameworks and the principles of South-South cooperation as endorsed by the Group of 77.

15. Therefore, it is important to underline that South-South initiatives should come as a complement and not a substitute to North-South cooperation. South-South cooperation is a collective endeavor of developing countries based on premises, conditions and, objectives that are specific to their historic and political context and to their needs and expectations. As such, South-South cooperation which is critical for the Group of 77 deserves its own separate and independent promotion as reaffirmed in the Nairobi outcome document and the G77 Development Platform for the South.

16. As you are fully aware, the provisions of the General Assembly resolution 64/222 to upgrade the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation responded to the decision of the Second South Summit which the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the Group of 77 and China reiterated in the Ministerial Declaration that "South-South Cooperation deserves its own promotion and its own visibility and its agenda must be driven by the countries of the South and that such cooperation, which is critical for developing countries, requires long-term vision and a global institutional arrangement as envisioned by the Second South Summit".

17. Furthermore, the UN High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation held in Nairobi, Kenya in December 2009, decided in paragraph 21(i) of the Nairobi Outcome Document which was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/222, to "invite the Secretary-General, in consultation with States Members of the United Nations, to take measures to further strengthen the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, as reaffirmed by the General Assembly in its resolutions 58/220, 60/212 and 62/209, so as to enable it to carry out its full responsibilities, in particular through the mobilization of resources for the advancement of South-South cooperation, including triangular cooperation."

18. In this context and in accordance with the mandate by the last G77 Annual Ministerial Meeting, the President of the General assembly and the UN Secretary-General were invited to initiate discussions as soon as possible, on options to implement the South Summit decision and the relevant General Assembly resolutions during the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We hope that the forthcoming consultations by both the President of the UN General Assembly and the Secretary-General will lead to a long term vision to identify a new institutional arrangement to further promote and expand South-South cooperation.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

19. On another note, I am very pleased to put on record that, at the initiative of the Group of 77 and China, the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly has decided to change the date of the UN Day for South-South Cooperation from 19 December to 12 September, beginning in 2012, to mark the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. Furthermore, the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, at the initiative of the Group of 77 and China, decided to rename also the PGTF as the "Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation".

20. In this context, with a view to giving further visibility to South-South cooperation, we have invited the UN Special Unit for South-South Cooperation to convene the next edition of the Expo at UN Headquarters on the 12th September 2012. Such Expo will provide a new opportunity for the G-77 to co-host, within the framework of the Expo, various South-South mandated forums for parliamentarians, mayors, youth, media and civil society as decided by the Ministerial Meeting of the G-77 held in New York on 23 September 2011. The Expo will be also an occasion to organize lectures in memory of eminent Southern personalities who made a significant contribution to South-South cooperation and solidarity including Raúl Prebisch, Julius Nyerere, Manuel Pérez Guerrero and others.

21. Furthermore, pursuant to the G-77 South Summit mandate and in response to the mandate by the Ministerial Meeting, a G77 High-level Forum on South-South Cooperation in Science and Technology was held in Budapest on 17 October 2011 on the occasion of the World Forum on Science. In accordance with the first Ministerial mandate, we have been working with the support of our Executive Secretary, towards the operationalization of the G77 Consortium on Science, Technology and Innovation for the South in partnership with the UN Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, particularly within the context of similar strategic initiatives. We are convinced that the First General Conference of COSTIS to be held this year will provide a solid platform for South-South cooperation in the field of science, technology and innovation.

22. In conclusion, I am pleased to commend the excellent work and continued valuable support provided by our Executive Secretary, Mr. Mourad Ahmia and his devoted competent team, who carried out heavy responsibilities. They have all provided us with great support and valuable assistance in this time of difficult negotiations. I salute all of them for their continued commitment and dedication to the goals and objectives of the Group of 77.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

23. Before concluding, I would like to say a few words in my national capacity.

24. On behalf of the Argentine Government, I wish to convey to the Member States of the G-77 and China our deepest gratitude for their support on the Question of the Malvinas Islands in the last Ministerial Declaration. As you know, Argentina continues to be fully committed to find a definitive solution to this anachronistic colonial situation that impairs its territorial integrity.

25. I would also like to express my personal gratitude to the Argentine Team of the G-77 led by Minister Marcelo Suárez Salvia for the excellent work done during this year and for their cooperation and tireless efforts. Without them the Argentine Chairmanship wouldn't have been able to achieve the good results I have just outlined.

26. I wish the Algerian Delegation all the success in their Chairmanship of the G-77 and China during 2012. You can count on Argentina's full support in this endeavour.

Thank you very much.

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