



STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. SAMEH HASSAN SHOUKRY, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF EGYPT, AT THE HANDOVER CEREMONY OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE GROUP OF 77 (New York, 12 January 2018)

Excellency, Mrs. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of the Republic of Ecuador,
Excellency, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, President of the General Assembly,
Excellency, Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General,
Mr. Murad Ahmia, Executive Secretary of the Group of 77,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to you, Minister Garcés, for the excellent efforts undertaken by Ecuador as the capable Chair of the Group of 77 during the past year. Throughout that year, the Group was fully engaged and well represented in the numerous meetings, events, and critical moments that shaped a challenging year for sustainable development and multilateralism here at the United Nations. I also would like to express our appreciation to Ambassador Diego Morejon and his team here in New York that shouldered the brunt of the workload.

Excellencies,

On behalf of the People and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, it is a great honor for me to partake in this important occasion, to assume the chairmanship of the Group of 77 for the year 2018. I assure you that Egypt will undertake this important responsibility in full faith, and that we will exert our full efforts in representing the Group and furthering the interests of its members. I would like to thank the entire membership of the Group for your confidence and endorsement. Moreover, I would like to particularly thank the African Group for having nominated Egypt.

Allow me also to acknowledge the presence here among us of PGA Lajčák, and Secretary-General Guterres, and to thank them for their efforts in support of our work here at the United Nations. Likewise, I would also like to welcome all our guests to our meeting today.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Indeed, ours is a time of challenges. The challenges of today are multi-faceted. We are facing a dearth of global solidarity. Indeed, multilateralism is under threat. Nonetheless, it is in the midst of such periods of challenging global conditions, of continuing poverty, much strife, conflict, and inequality in the midst of opportunity and plenty that the Group of 77 finds its calling. The strength of the Group of 77 lies in its founding principles, of unity and solidarity, and being among the true champions of multilateralism.

Mr. Secretary-General,

The legacy of the Group of 77 is inextricable from that of the United Nations. It would be no exaggeration to state and to remind ourselves that so much of what the United Nations has achieved in this past half century in the development sphere, has been in one way or another

inspired, founded, shaped, and supported towards fruition, through the aid of the Group of 77. This is not self-congratulatory, nor acclamations of glory. On the contrary, it is stated to underpin the great responsibility that the Group carries upon its shoulders. Let us not forget that our members represent four fifths of humanity. More so, it is to remind ourselves that this heritage of the Group of 77 in the United Nations was possible not due to what some might perceive as the power of numbers and votes, but rather due to the championing of multilateralism, and global solidarity behind a positive agenda for equality and prosperity. This feat has never been easy.

Madame Minister,

You would have undoubtedly witnessed first-hand the diversity among the members of our Group. Indeed, while this often makes for slower paced consensus building, yet equally, it is in this wealth of diversity that the Group is genetically enabled to accommodate differences and achieve unity of purpose, and solidarity of position. This is a microcosm of what we envision for multilateralism and the United Nations. This is the reason we will continue to strive for accommodation with our partners. We must not forget that these partners are themselves equally diverse in their capacities, needs, and potentials. Indeed, the World of the early twenty-first century is an era of fluidity, an era of flux. However, this is the World with which the Group of 77 and all our partners must grapple with.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to raise with you and highlight some of the priorities we will need to address over the course of the year.

Indeed, a reading of the Ministerial Declaration of the Group of 77 and China of September 2017 reveals the diversity of issues and challenges facing developing countries, and reflect the complex nature of the global order in which we live. Undoubtedly, the greatest challenge we continue to face, that of the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, remains the quintessential challenge. Poverty lies as the root cause of the bulk of the challenges the world continues to face today. Eradicating poverty must remain at the center of the UN sustainable development agenda. Moreover, the responsibility and will of the international community therein must not be allowed to waver. In fact, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is an important blueprint for how we have all vouched to tackle the challenge of poverty eradication, and all the various manifestations. It is an ambitious agenda we have set to carry us forward. We need to ensure that its full implementation is possible in all our countries.

While the priorities of the Group of 77, reflecting those of its member states are numerous, we will continue to tackle them during our engagements at the UN and beyond throughout this year. In addition to this broad agenda, allow me to share with you key priorities that we believe will merit special attention of the Group this year.

First, ***the challenges of youth employment and productive capacities*** have a direct relation in our world today. The way forward in order to generate enough sustainable employment opportunities for our youth is through an expansion of our productive capacities, industrialization and infrastructure development, and thus ensuring sufficient labor-intensive economic growth. Indeed, we recognize the vast potential of youth in contributing to development and social cohesion.

Second, the need for ***global support in the implementation of sustainable development commitments, including those of the relevant regional agendas***, such as the African Union's

Agenda 2063, are important drivers of change for meeting the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. We believe that more attention needs to be directed by the international community to regional sustainable development agendas. In this regard, we are willing to pursue further support at the UN for the agendas of our Group's three constituent regions.

Third, the ***rapid pace of change in issues at the forefront of technology, and of global regulation, the so-called frontier issues***, necessitate a broad based multilateral consensus on how they are to be tackled and regulated. The Group of 77 must have a clear roadmap of how to proceed on these frontier issues, and to build consensus on how to lead this issue within the United Nations.

Fourth, the ***economic empowerment of women*** lies at the core of efforts to achieve sustainable development. We believe that there is a mutually reinforcing relationship between women's economic empowerment and the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Fifth, we recognize the importance of this year in the ***climate change negotiations***, as these should lead to the needed decisions for the operationalization of the Paris Agreement. In this regard, we believe that the way forward should rest on two main pillars: first, is to ensure the unity of the Group around our agreed principles and visions taking into consideration the linkage between climate change, development and the capacities of developing countries; second, we need to ensure proper preparations and capacity building for our negotiating teams to ensure full effectiveness in the negotiations process. We need to ensure that the negotiations outcomes in COP 24 in Poland are up to the expectations of our Peoples, including through ensuring the availability of adequate, predictable and sustainable means of implementation in-line with the agreed principles under the Convention and its Paris Agreement.

Sixth, the Group will remain engaged in the ***ongoing processes to reform the United Nations system***, and particularly of the UN Development System reform and the Management reform. Indeed, we are committed to working tirelessly to enhance the contribution of the G77 in the relevant deliberations and decision-making processes in relation to these reforms. In this context, we will safeguard the Group's position, which is based on the premise that reform must be grounded in the firm foundation of the Organization's intergovernmental and multilateral character; that development remains the mandate of the UN operational activities for development; and that an effective and efficient United Nations is a key to the pursuit of a more just international order. Furthermore, Management reform must strengthen the ability of the UN to implement its mandates fully and effectively. Likewise, enhancing transparency and accountability to member states must be among the main principles of reform. Indeed, reform, and particularly that of the UN Development System, must serve to position the Organization to redouble its efforts for the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Excellencies,

In identifying these six priorities, in addition to others that it will be your responsibility here in New York to define over the coming period, we cannot lose sight of the importance of the means of implementation. Assured and predictable financial flows are indispensable to the realization of the Agenda. The Group must continue to assess progress, identify obstacles and challenges to the implementation of the financing for development outcomes. Moreover, specific issues, including those of illicit financial flows, tax avoidance and evasion, and money-laundering present us with a

significant impediment in our capacity to mobilize resources for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and we must strive to address their ramifications in a steady manner. Likewise, the issues of trade, investment, technology transfer, debt, and systemic issues are essential for achieving our priorities.

Finally, we must pay particular attention to contextual issues, including so-called linkage issues. The debates around the linkages between sustainable development and humanitarian efforts, between sustainable development and sustaining peace are all issue of context that the Group needs to continue to discuss and define the way forward. In addition, 2018 will also witness important deliberations on South-South Cooperation in the lead-up to the second UN High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation in March 2019. The Group of 77 should have the leading role in this process.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The challenges we face are in large part those of the United Nations. We must strive to solve them in a spirit of inclusion. We share a common purpose that we have always strived to attain - equality and a fair, equitable and just international economic order. As I shared with you four months ago upon Egypt's election as Chair of the Group, the G77 has and will always maintain this purpose, and will always work in the spirit of building bridges and reaching consensus with all members of the international community in pursuit thereof. You have entrusted us with a worthy cause, and we intend to perform this task well, and assure you that we will continue to uphold, and take forward the true spirit of multilateralism.

Thank you.