



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR. J. V. BAINIMARAMA, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI, ON THE OCCASION OF FIJI'S ASSUMPTION OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE GROUP OF 77 (New York, 15 January 2013)**

Honourable Outgoing Chair of the Group of 77,  
Mr. President of the General Assembly,  
Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations,  
Mr. Executive Secretary of the Group of 77,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

1. At the outset, I wish all of you a happy and prosperous new year. Please allow me to express my great pleasure and honour - on behalf of the people and the Government of Fiji - in assuming the Chairmanship of the Group of 77 [G77] for 2013.
2. As we undertake this high responsibility, I would like to express our deepest gratitude and sincere thanks to Algeria for their admirable stewardship of the G77, under the able leadership of the distinguished Ambassador Mourad BENMEHIDI and his competent team in New York. On your behalf and on my own behalf, we salute the delegation of Algeria for the excellent job well done last year.

I also wish to acknowledge and thank Executive Secretary Mr. Mourad AHMIA for his invaluable support through this transition. We will certainly be relying on his vast experience and able leadership to successfully carry on the Group's programme for 2013.

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

3. Although the world is changing in a number of ways - particularly for developing nations - the founding mission of the G77 is as valid as ever. The Group of 77 was founded in 1964 to collectively boost the role and influence of developing countries on the global stage. The first Ministerial Meeting of the G77 - held in Algiers - adopted the "Charter of Algiers" on 25 October 1967, which set forth the Group's strategic vision and objectives.
  4. Today, developing countries represent an overwhelming majority of both the world's population and of UN member states. The G77 has a vital interest in preserving the spirit and objectives of the United Nations - as embodied in its Charter and reflected in its efforts to promote peace, development, international cooperation, global public interest, and the democratization of the world order - including its structures and processes. .
- Fiji is committed to supporting the G77's efforts to preserve the spirit of the UN Charter and to make the UN a more effective forum for confronting and resolving the challenges developing nations face in today's world. These challenges have expanded significantly in recent years, and a number of our demands remain unanswered.
5. With this in mind, Fiji will continue to promote the G77's interests and will remain fully committed to its principles and objectives.

6. Development issues pertaining to the global economic agenda can only be advanced through multilateral processes and negotiations. Our collective interests and the successful pursuit of these interests depend on our ability to effectively mobilize our members in various forums and to maintain the most unified positions possible whenever our common development goals are at stake.

7. Despite our great diversity, we have managed to present a common front over the years. Fiji intends to continue this tradition. The spirit of consultation and solidarity that prevails in our Group has been a great strength. It has helped us consolidate our acquired experience and safeguard our strategic interests.

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

8. During 2013, the Group will continue to press our collective view on a number of major issues, including the ongoing global financial and economic crisis, sustainable development, the millennium development goals, and internationally agreed development goals--as well as financing for development, among others.

9. The follow-up processes agreed to in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in Rio de Janeiro last June will be one of the main priorities of our Group this year. In this regard, we will pay special attention to ensuring a fair representation of developing countries in the international fora and to the effective and full implementation of the outcomes of the conference. These include enforcing effective institutional frameworks for sustainable development at all levels and providing the adequate means for developing countries to implement those outcomes.

10. In approaching these issues, we believe that the global challenges facing our countries require better cooperation and coordination. To this end, we will continue to strengthen our cooperation with the Non-Aligned Movement - through the Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) - in order to reinforce our positions on issues of common interest.

11. In this context, our Group will need to continue to defend the diverse and inclusive nature of the United Nations - the only permanent institution with a universal and global agenda - from efforts that seek to reduce it merely to an administrative body on the one hand, or that seek to make it serve the interests of a minority on the other. Our Group will need to press for a greatly strengthened Secretariat to provide our Secretary-General with the necessary support and resources to support the many diverse paths developing nations are taking to improve the lives and livelihoods of their citizens.

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

12. Since the inception of the Group of 77 - almost five decades ago - we have always given South-South cooperation a special place in the development agenda. Today, South-South cooperation remains our primary focus. The exchange of resources, technology and knowledge between developing nations has increased in importance and scope, and we believe strongly in South-South cooperation as a complement to North-South cooperation.

13. Therefore, we will pursue the policy of strengthening South-South cooperation by following the roadmap established by the South Summits. In this spirit, this year Fiji intends to convene a

meeting of the High-level Panel of Eminent Personalities of the South to address relevant development challenges and to update the Development Platform for the South, as mandated by the Second South Summit.

14. Furthermore, we are fully committed to providing the necessary support to help bring the new UN Office for South-South Cooperation on line - the entity charged with coordinating and promoting South-South cooperation across the entire UN system.

But I would also like to take this opportunity to encourage the UN Secretary-General to take necessary measures to ensure that the UN Office for South-South Cooperation is provided with the necessary resources.

15. South-South cooperation will continue to represent the best form of solidarity and interdependence among the members of our Group. Therefore - in accordance with the relevant mandates - meetings in various fields of South-South cooperation will be convened in order to prepare for the Third South Summit.

16. Finally, let me assure you that under Fiji's Chairmanship our Group will continue to look for new strategic partnerships with different United Nations agencies and organizations and to strengthen the negotiating capacity of our Group. We will also continue to expand our cooperation and coordination with the Non-Aligned Movement to further develop and reinforce our common positions. And we are committed to represent the collective interests of the Group of 77 and China to the best of our abilities during our Chairmanship in the next 12 months. To ensure we deliver on this responsibility, the Fiji Government has allocated appropriate resources at various levels, including at its Permanent Mission in New York.

17. In conclusion, please allow me to once again reiterate my sincere thanks and appreciation to all the Member States of the Group of 77 and China for the trust and confidence they have placed in Fiji as we assume the Chairmanship of the Group in 2013. On behalf of the people and Government of Fiji, I assure you once again that we will work tirelessly with all of you to promote the principles and objectives of our Group in the different international fora.

Thank you.