



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY
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REPRESENTATIVE, PERMANENT MISSION OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA
TO THE UN DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE FOR THE HIGH-LEVEL
SEGMENT AT THE 2008 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE ECOSOC (New
York, 1 July 2008)**

Mr. President,

1. It is an honor and personal privilege to make this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China at this General Debate for the High-Level Segment of the 2008 ECOSOC Substantive Review Session.

2. I feel a great sense of history to see you, a son of one of the proudest, but most challenged countries of the Caribbean, indeed of the world, presiding over this meeting. I congratulate you, sir, for the manner in which you have presided over the Council, and for your leadership and guidance.

Mr. President,

3. We meet at a most challenging time. The international community is confronted by multiple inter-related and mutually reinforcing crises, including a global food crisis, a financial crisis, an energy crisis driven significantly by a severely unbalanced international economic system, made even more unbalanced by speculation; a climate crisis and environmental crisis as well as a crisis of confidence in international institutions which were created to provide policy advice and coordination on global issues.

4. These crises come on top of fundamental structural challenges, including persistent wide-spread poverty, growing inequities among and between states, an unsustainable pattern of production and consumption and environmental mismanagement leading to possibly irreversible climate change and an entrenched inequality in the distribution of power in decision making.

Mr. President,

5. We also meet at a time when the world is increasingly looking to the United Nations, including the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), for leadership in tackling these global economic and social challenges. In that context it is fortuitous that the two new institutional mechanisms - the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) and the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) - established by the World Summit in 2005 to strengthen the capacity of ECOSOC have come on stream at this stage. This week we participate in the first meeting of DCF and the second meeting of the AMR. It will be vital for the public perception of, and continued confidence in the United Nations and the ECOSOC that these two mechanisms establish an image of openness and demonstrate a capacity to make bold new recommendations based on factual evidence and to systematically monitor their implementation.

Mr. President,

6. In recognition of the confluence of circumstances, we have correctly focused this session of the Council on "implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regards to sustainable development" and "promoting and integrated approach to rural development in

developing countries for poverty eradication and sustainable development, taking into account current challenges".

Mr. President,

7. Implementation is the operative word. The ECOSOC must therefore methodically review where we are regarding implementation of various agreements and commitments, assess the constraints to implementation, and give direction to encourage and facilitate the coordinated effort required. All this in the context of the increased urgency induced by the current global economic crises, in particular the global food crisis.

8. Against this barometer of implementation the review in this second AMR of "Implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to sustainable development" gives cause for concern. Two points will demonstrate this. First, the findings in the recent report of the International Panel on Climate Change is clear evidence of the failure of the developed countries to implement measures to mitigate adverse climate change as called for in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Second, we are behind schedule to achieve most of the MDG targets and the rate of progress in many areas could slow in the face of the current multiple crises which are impacting the poorer countries and the poorer segments within countries even more severely.

Mr. President,

9. The DCF will also find and should also highlight that national development strategies and the mobilization of domestic resources will not be sufficient for developing countries to achieve sustainable development, particularly integrated rural development, including the development of agriculture and food production. A coherent conducive and facilitative international economic policy environment is an important compliment. The international policy environment has not been either conducive or facilitative. External resources - private and official - have not focused on development. Put differently it has not been evaluated in terms of development effectiveness or impact.

Mr. President,

10. In the view of the Group of 77 and China, this Session of ECOSOC must demonstrate the preparedness of ECOSOC to be proactive, to become seized of emerging threats and to exercise its coordinating responsibility. Towards that end, we recognize, Mr. President, your efforts this year to have the Council address several emerging issues and to involve a wide cross section of stakeholders. To advance and institutionalize that process, this session of ECOSOC must, at a minimum:

I. Recognize explicitly the impact which the continuing lack of coherence in global macroeconomic and trade policies and the politics and actions of international financial institutions and some developed countries have on the achievement of global and national goals and use its authority to encourage and promote coordination and coherence. As stated earlier, a more facilitative and enabling environment is vital to the success of national policies and programs for sustainable development, for rural development and for poverty eradication in developing countries;

II. Begin to put itself in a position to pronounce on the performance of developing and developed countries and international institutions in relation to their commitments and address critical shortcomings in this regard.

III. Express its deep concern at the fall in ODA in 2006 and 2007 and the systematic decline in ODA for the rural development and the agricultural sectors over several years. It must call on developed countries to meet their longstanding commitments, including at the Doha Conference, which will review the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development, to address the issues fundamentally;

IV. Call attention to the continuing deleterious impact of inappropriate and incoherent global trade policies and global macro-economic policies, programs and advice on development prospects, in particular, rural development, agricultural development and poverty eradication in developing countries, as well as their role in the current food crisis. It must call for the immediate elimination of trade distorting subsidies and other market distorting measures by developed countries which have severely impacted on the agriculture sector in developing countries and constrain their ability to contribute meaningfully to sustained economic growth, food security and rural development. It should also call on member states; to address in a balanced manner all the issues related to the achievement of the MDGs, in particular the eradication of hunger and poverty, in accordance with the three pillars of sustainable development.

V. The Council should also call for arrangements that can provide reliable and systematic information as the basis on which the AMR can effectively evaluate the performance of developed and developing countries, as well as international institutions in relation to the global partnership for development and more specifically to their commitments to the achievement of the IADG's including the MDG's and more generally to sustainable development.

VI. It should also recognize that the sustainable development challenge varies for different categories of developing countries, including Least Developed Countries, Small-island Developing States, Land-locked Developing Countries, middle-income developing states, states emerging from conflicts and people under occupation. All states must be accommodated in any effort at a comprehensive solution to the sustainable development challenge.

VII. Additionally, the Council should express its deep concern about the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures and urge for it immediate elimination.

VIII. Urge developed countries to work for a successful conclusion with a development oriented outcome of the Doha Round of trade negotiations.

Mr. President,

These are extraordinary times; they require extraordinary responses from the international community. The G77 and China is hopeful that the UN and ECOSOC can rise to that challenge.

I thank you.