



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MINISTER MARCELO SUAREZ SALVIA, PERMANENT MISSION OF ARGENTINA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS SEGMENT OF THE 2011 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (Geneva, Switzerland, 19 July 2011)

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. At the outset, allow me, on behalf of the Group, to thank you and other members of the Bureau for organizing this very important segment.

Mr. President,

2. The Group of 77 and China welcomes the theme of Humanitarian Affairs Segment of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2011 entitled "Working in partnership to strengthen coordination of humanitarian assistance in a changing world". This theme offers a valuable opportunity to further discuss how Member States, the UN System and other stakeholders can continue to enhance the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance in order to effectively address the needs of the increasing number of people affected by humanitarian emergencies.

3. In this regard, bearing in mind the 20th Anniversary of the adoption of the General Assembly resolution 46/182 on "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations", adopted on 19th December 1991, the Group of 77 and China urges all actors engaged in the provision of humanitarian assistance to fully commit to and duly respect the guiding principles contained in the annex to this resolution, including the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality as well as the principle of independence, as a basis of all responses to humanitarian emergencies and guide the efficiency and coordination of humanitarian assistance by the UN and other relevant organizations.

4. Furthermore, the Group of 77 and China reaffirms the primary role of the concerned State in the initiation, organization, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian assistance.

Mr. President,

5. In recent years we have witnessed an increase in frequency and intensity of disasters, and an increase in the number of people affected by humanitarian emergencies. Moreover, the continuing impact of climate change, the ongoing adverse impacts of financial and economic crisis, the global food crisis and continuing food insecurity are posing additional challenges to the humanitarian response system. Therefore, it is necessary to further strengthen the capacity, in particular of developing countries, to prepare for and respond to disasters, taking into account that building preparedness is a long-term investment that contribute to the saving of lives while at the same time reducing the need for humanitarian response.

6. In this context, the Group of 77 and China urges the United Nations system and the international

community to assist developing countries in the enhancement of their existing humanitarian capacities, knowledge and institutions, including by, inter alia, through the transfer of technology, funding and expertise, in order to facilitate appropriate preparedness for and response to these increasing humanitarian emergencies.

7. Respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States must remain the overarching parameters in all efforts for coordination of humanitarian assistance. In this regard, we also emphasize the primary role of the concerned State in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance. It is critical that affected States, donor countries, the UN system and other humanitarian organizations work together to provide much needed humanitarian assistance and development support, recognizing the primary role of the affected State.

8. Humanitarian emergencies, in particular armed conflicts, disproportionately affect civilians, especially women and children and also other vulnerable groups. Addressing the special needs of these groups and provision of necessary services, calls for a strong commitment and commensurate action.

9. Funding remains a challenge in the context of increasing humanitarian emergencies, to Member States, in particular developing countries, and the international humanitarian response system. In order to effectively respond to all humanitarian emergencies, the Group of 77 and China believes it is necessary to promote and achieve effective, predictable, flexible and adequate funding through enhanced partnerships and strengthened financial mechanisms for humanitarian assistance.

Mr. President,

10. The Group of 77 and China reaffirms that Member States must comply fully with their obligations under international humanitarian law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 to protect and assist civilians in occupied territories and call the UN System and the international community to strengthen their efforts to provide the humanitarian assistance to those civilians.

Mr. President,

11. In closing, I would like to express that the Group of 77 and China has engaged actively and constructively during the negotiations on the resolution entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations" and looks forward to its adoption by consensus.

12. The G77 and China believes that provision of the emergency assistance to an affected country should not be seen as an isolated mechanism in the overall effort for humanitarian response. We consider that there is a clear relationship between emergency relief, rehabilitation and development in order to ensure a smooth transition from relief to development, humanitarian assistance must be provided in ways that will support recovery and long-term development. In this regard, there is room for further enhancing coordination between humanitarian and development actors. Humanitarian assistance must not be seen, however, as a replacement for international development cooperation.

Thank you.