



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS DURING THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC) HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS SEGMENT (Geneva, Switzerland, 17 June 2015)

Mr. President,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

At the outset let me express the Group's appreciation for having been given the opportunity to participate in this important Segment on humanitarian affairs under the theme "the future of humanitarian affairs: towards greater inclusiveness, coordination, interoperability and effectiveness". We hope that discussions and debates here will further strengthen an enhanced and coordinated international humanitarian response in order to effectively address the needs of the increasing number of people affected by humanitarian emergencies. Our discussions should also provide us with new tools and innovative ways to effectively provide emergency humanitarian assistance.

The issue of humanitarian assistance is intrinsically linked to the core interests of the Group of 77 and China within the humanitarian affairs domain. Suffice to say that the group engaged constructively in the negotiations of the ECOSOC resolution "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, adopted by this Segment.

Mr. President,

The Group reaffirms its commitment and support to the guiding principles articulated in the annex of the General Assembly Resolution 46/182 of December 1991, as the founding resolution of the framework for the provision of UN humanitarian assistance. Member States, in cooperation with United Nations humanitarian organizations, should continue to provide humanitarian assistance pursuant to this resolution, including by promoting greater respect for and full adherence to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence.

Mr. President,

The humanitarian consequences of climate change with its extreme environmental events have serious adverse effects for millions of people and their countries today. While all countries are at risk, developing countries are more vulnerable because of fewer resources and capacities at their disposal to cope with and adapt to climate change and environmental degradation. Within developing countries, low lying small island states, the poorest and people living in vulnerable situations are most susceptible to the adverse effects of environmental degradation. While resilience of vulnerable communities can be increased to reduce the chances for forced migration, the risk of forced environmental migration of people from low lying small island states is real. To this end, the Group highlights the need to mainstream environmental resilience, adaptation and mitigation as well as climate change policy considerations into migration, development and humanitarian assistance, at the international and national levels.

Mr. President,

Our discussions are indeed very important and timely, as they come shortly after the General Assembly has just adopted a Sendai Framework 2016-2030, which amongst others, focuses on disaster risk reduction, preparedness for effective response, building back better in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction. As you will agree Disaster Risk Reduction framework needs to be an action-orientated framework for disaster risk reduction in view of the varying disasters that need to be addressed for saving lives, improving resilience, risk management and the reduction of economic losses.

Additionally, the Group stresses the need to strengthen and support disaster preparedness and response, and "promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective disaster prevention and preparedness, climate change-related planning and management in developing countries in particular, LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS, Africa, and the specific challenges facing Middle Income Countries, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities".

Mr. President,

While emphasizing the importance of international cooperation in support of the efforts of the affected States in dealing with humanitarian emergencies in all their phases, including in preparedness, response and the early recovery phase, the Group of 77 and China reaffirms also that the affected State has the primary role in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory.

The Group also emphasizes that the guiding principles of respect of sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States should remain the overarching parameters in all efforts for coordination of humanitarian assistance. It is also acknowledged that the United Nations has a unique role to play in providing technical support and coordinating the efforts of the international community to support the affected countries.

Mr. President,

The Group of 77 and China reaffirms that 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. The Group further reiterates its call on the United Nations System and the International Community to strengthen their efforts to provide the humanitarian assistance to those civilians. Further action should be taken in this regard.

Mr. President,

Emergency humanitarian assistance to affected countries should not be seen as an isolated mechanism for humanitarian response or as a replacement for international development cooperation. Emergency humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation and long term development are different stages of coordinated effort that should remain separated. Humanitarian assistance must be provided in ways that will support recovery and long-term development. In this regard, coordination and collaboration between humanitarian and development actors need to be enhanced.

Consequently, the Group believes that, humanitarian assistance should not exclude the promotion of human rights, in particular the right to development.

Mr. President,

On humanitarian financing, the Group is of a strong view that further action is needed, including by

the diversification of funding mechanisms by member states, humanitarian and development organizations, including private sectors and humanitarian funding institutions, to assist developing countries investments in preparedness, prevention, mitigation and response capacity. Increased funding for humanitarian assistance, through partnerships and strengthened and flexible financial mechanisms is also essential.

In this regard, the Group reiterates its call to strengthen international cooperation in providing additional, adequate, sustainable and predictable means of implementation including finance, technology transfer or capacity enhancement, especially to developing countries, as means to support national efforts and capacities to provide humanitarian assistance. This will be done while acknowledging the existing gaps in capacities between developed and developing countries.

The Group of 77 and China also recognizes that accountability is an integral part of effective humanitarian assistance, and emphasizes the need to enhance the accountability of humanitarian actors at all stages of humanitarian assistance. The Group calls upon the United Nations and its humanitarian partners to enhance accountability to Member States, including affected States, and all other stakeholders, and to further strengthen humanitarian response efforts, including by monitoring and evaluating the provision of their humanitarian assistance incorporating lessons learned into programming and consulting with the affected populations so that their needs are appropriately addressed.

Mr. President,

The Group of 77 and China believes that information sharing is important in assisting states to reduce the impact of humanitarian emergencies. It is therefore imperative that the UN system and relevant humanitarian and development organizations ensure that sharing data on risks that can lead to humanitarian crisis also incorporates the need for building capacities of developing countries to undertake such measures.

It is the Group's collective view that the international community should increase dialogue among all stakeholders, to identify, amongst others, barriers and opportunities to build an enabling environment for public-private and other partnerships. We should also further strengthen private sector commitments to integrate risk assessment and use of risk information, decision-making and practices to be able to better respond to humanitarian emergencies.

The Group is of the view that institutionalization of integrated community resilience approaches into local development planning should be encouraged. At the same time, we should further develop community based humanitarian approaches at the local level and take advantage of traditional knowledge in this regard. Emergency preparedness through already established institutional mechanisms and frameworks, at national, regional and international levels should serve as a base to build resilience and reduce vulnerability.

The Group of 77 and China also urges the United Nations to identify solutions to strengthen its ability to recruit and deploy appropriately senior, skilled and experienced humanitarian staff giving principal consideration to the competence and integrity, and while paying due regard to gender equality and equitable geographic representation.

Before concluding, let me express Mr President our appreciation to the co-facilitators, Bangladesh and Switzerland, for their tireless efforts which enabled the group to agree upon the important issues. Allow me also to express our gratitude to the able coordinator, M. Kamel CHIR, from the delegation of Algeria, for coordinating the position of the Group during the negotiating process.

We also wish to assure you Mr President of the commitment of the Group of 77 and China to reaching a meaningful and ambitious outcome by the end of this humanitarian affairs segment of ECOSOC. This we believe will provide support and assist in resource mobilization in particular to developing countries, to enhance a truly global partnership.

I thank you.

