



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY AMBASSADOR ABDALMAHOOD ABDALHALEEM MOHAMED, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN TO THE UN, DURING THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY MEETING (IPM) OF THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (CSD-17) (New York, 23 February 2009)**

Madam Chair,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your election as the Chairman of the Seventeenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-17) and to convey our profound appreciation for your able stewardship of this very timely and important session.
2. Let me express our appreciations to the Secretary General for presenting informative reports on the thematic clusters of CSD-17, which will help guide our deliberations.
3. The Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting (IPM) is an integral part of our preparations for the Seventeenth Session of CSD. This session is of particular importance as it is expected to take important policy decisions to expedite implementation of Agenda 21 in the critical interrelated thematic clusters of this cycle; Agriculture, Rural Development, Drought, Desertification, Land, and Africa.
4. These thematic clusters, as we have seen in our deliberations during the review session of CSD 16 in May 2008, assume particular significance and relevance given the current global context; the multiple interrelated and mutually reinforcing crises, including the financial crisis, the global food crisis and climate change. Our discussions, and in particular the views of the Group of 77 and China expressed during CSD 16, provide good guidance for furthering the implementation of Agenda 21 as it relates to the current thematic clusters.
5. As CSD-17 aims at finding ways and actions to address the challenges identified in the review year with regard to the six themes policy options and recommendations, it must take into consideration the special needs of developing countries, particularly those in Africa, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.
6. The Group reiterates the importance of taking further effective measures to remove developmental obstacles for people living under foreign occupation, which continue to adversely affect their economic and social development and are incompatible with the dignity and worth of human persons.
7. The Group also reaffirms the special needs and challenges faced by countries emerging from conflict, and urge the international community and the UN system to address these needs in the areas of financial assistance, technical support and infrastructure development, in order to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs

8. The Group reiterates that consideration of the thematic issues in the agenda of CSD must be undertaken in the context of the three pillars of sustainable development, which include economic development, social development and environmental protection. The three pillars are mutually reinforcing and inter-related and they must be considered in an integrated manner.
9. CSD 17 is particularly significant in view of their direct impact on our endeavors to eradicate poverty and hunger and address the food security crisis and achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.
10. As we approach this critical policy session, the Group re-emphasizes the inter linkages between the thematic clusters of this cycle. The Secretary General's report rightly points out that policies and measures aimed at one issue may have co-benefits for the other, and that policy options and possible actions can be more effective if their interlinked aspects are taken into consideration at the outset.
11. Agriculture, rural development, and land management are crucial sectors especially in developing countries. The Group agrees that advancing the implementation of the agricultural development agenda requires renewed commitment and a new vision for global cooperation to implement policies that simultaneously aim at increasing agricultural productivity, creating fair trade regimes, conserving natural resources, and investing in agricultural-related infrastructure.
12. In this regard policy options and measures must include improving access to the markets of developed countries accompanied by access to, the development, acquisition, transfer and diffusion of new technologies, particularly environmentally sound technologies and corresponding know-how to developing countries, in order to increase productivity and competitiveness.
13. Desertification, drought and land degradation continue to pose serious threats to developing countries and obstruct efforts at revitalizing the agricultural sector. These are severe problems with social and economic implications, and they aggravate the problems of poverty and hunger. The Group believes that through international mechanism such as the UNCCD and GEF, the international community should intensify its support to developing countries in the areas of sustainable management of lands, development of agriculture, addressing drought and combating desertification and degradation.
14. The Group looks forward to UNCCD/ COP 9 later this year, and the decisions it will take, particularly pertaining to the 10 year strategic plan to enhance the implementation of the convention. The Group attaches particular importance to the Strategic Plan's four objectives, which it considers a basis for concerted global action.
15. The African continent is the most vulnerable and disadvantaged continent in relation to the thematic issues of for CSD 17. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the international community committed itself to support Africa in meeting the mounting challenges it faces, which are becoming ever more intense under the current global environment. International commitments to Africa must be met in the areas of trade, technology transfer, ODA, debt relief. The international community must step up its efforts to support the continent's effort in reducing poverty and hunger and addressing the current food crisis, particularly in reviving the agriculture sector.

Madam Chair,

16. The need for a fully supportive and enabling international environment to facilitate and promote the implementation of national development strategies by developing countries is critical even as

the world faces widespread economic contraction. It must be reiterated that the challenges developing countries face go beyond the issues of political commitment, to that of our lack of capacity, inadequate resources including financial, human and technical; crippling impact of external debt; unfair trade, which impede our development efforts.

17. Due to all these impediments, it is not within the capacity of developing countries to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, without a supportive and enabling international environment. For this reason, strategies to reverse the current global economic downturn should also take into consideration measures to ensure a supportive international environment for sustainable development, with special focus on the themes for CSD-17.

Madam Chair,

18. Despite outlining a comprehensive global development agenda through the agreements reached and commitments made at major UN Summits and Conferences, it is of great concern to the Group of 77 and China that this has not translated into action on the ground, and tangible results sufficient to put all of the developing world on track to meet the MDGs. The implementation gap remains the biggest challenge for sustainability.

19. Financing for development has never been more critical. In this regard, the recent decision taken at the Doha Review Conference on Financing for Development regarding the holding of a high-level conference on the financial crisis is a welcome initiative which we must utilize to address all issues including those systemic in nature in relation to the current financial crisis..

Madam Chair,

20. In 2012, the international community will reach the twenty-year mark of the Earth Summit held in 1992 and the ten-year anniversary of WSSD held in Johannesburg in 2002. It will be 40 years after the Stockholm Conference of 1972. The time will be opportune for the international community to thoroughly review and assess the progress achieved since these two momentous summits. Guided by the "Rio Spirit", a Rio-plus-20 Summit should provide the necessary political impetus for the range and level of action required to bridge the implementation gap. In this context, the G-77 and China welcomes the offer of the Government of Brazil to host such a Summit in 2012.

21. In conclusion, the Group attaches great importance to the role of Commission on Sustainable Development, and believes that the Commission should continue to provide guidance and coordination on issues related to the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, and more importantly the means of their implementation.

22. We expect that CSD-17 will agree to a set of action-based and development oriented policy options including mechanisms for their follow up and implementation. We would like to approach the forthcoming CSD with a view to finding sustainable solutions to the development challenges that we continue to face in an international environment that is becoming increasingly unfriendly due to the economic recession and complex financial crises.

I thank you.