

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR DAUDI N. MWAKAWAGO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE AD HOC INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON FORESTS - FOURTH SESSION

New York, 11 February 1997

The Co-Chairmen of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I should like at the outset to sincerely congratulate you and all the delegations for the excellent job you have so far done in the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) process. We are particularly pleased that in accordance with the agreement reached at the IPF-3 meeting last September, the Co-Chairmen have successfully compiled a draft final report which will be the basis of negotiations at this Fourth Session.

Mr. Chairman,

The Intergovernmental Panel on Forests process is an important contribution towards the elaboration of the Forests Principles which were agreed to at the Rio United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992, including, inter alia, proposals for the implementation of forest-related decisions at national and international levels, international cooperation on financial assistance and technology transfer, and institutional matters and appropriate legal mechanisms.

Mr. Chairman,

The implementation of forest-related decisions of UNCED and the IPF recommendations implies that the forest issue should be comprehensively addressed. This is especially important to ensure a rational and holistic approach to the sustainable and environmentally sound development of forests. Indeed, forests have wide-ranging implications for the successful implementation of various environmental conventions such as the Framework Convention on Climate Change, Convention on Biodiversity, and the Convention on Desertification and Drought. Furthermore, there is an urgent need for the management and conservation of all types of forests within different countries in order to ensure that resources and forest lands are sustainably developed to meet social, economic, ecological and cultural needs of present and future generations,

A specific anti-poverty strategy is therefore one of the basic conditions for ensuring sustainable forest development. In particular, it must be ensured that local community and forest dwellers are prime beneficiaries of the forest management programmer.

Mr. Chairman,

It was underscored at the Rio UNCED that the implementation of any agreed forest-related decisions would crucially depend on the availability of adequate additional financial resources and environmentally sound technologies. In developing countries, domestic resources for financing sustainable development are scarce, hence international financial sources remain vital. While developing countries strive hard to mobilize their own domestic resources, the international community is expected to provide additional support through the mobilization of new, innovative and additional forms of finance at bilateral, multilateral and private levels. Moreover, there is a need to examine new ways and find durable solutions to the debt problems of low income and least developed countries (LDCs) in order to provide them with the needed means for development, including the management and sustainable development of their forest sectors.

Official Development Assistance (ODA) is also an important source of funding for environment related projects in developing countries. It is encouraging to note that currently up to US\$1.5 billion of ODA disbursement is earmarked for sustainable development programmes. However, ODA flows are generally below the internationally agreed target of 0.7% of developed countries' GNP. The average ODA flows stand at about 0.3% and ODA reaching LDCs is a trickle 0.09%. Since ODA is the main source of bilateral assistance in many LDCs, it is important that donors increase their ODA contributions, including the additionality for sustainable development activities. In this context, we congratulate those donors who have reached the agreed ODA target and above.

Mr. Chairman,

Concerning technology transfer for sustainable development, it is the view of the Group of 77 and China countries that environmentally sound technologies should be made available to developing countries at affordable terms and without the stringency of intellectual property rights. It is regretted that at present there is no internationally agreed mechanism for the transfer of technology from the developed countries to the developing countries apart from the commercial exchanges mainly through the private sector, which most developing countries, especially the LDCs, cannot afford.

Mr. Chairman,

From the aforesaid, it is clear to us that if a solution to the issue of resources and technology transfer is not found, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to implement the environmental programmes as envisaged in Agenda 21 and IPF, in the developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

Finally, I should like to offer preliminary comments on the future arrangements for the follow-up to the work of IPF, which is the focus of deliberations in programme element V.2 of the IPF agenda, Many useful options for action have been suggested at intergovernmental and interagency levels, as well as the necessary legal mechanism. It is the hope of the Group of 77 and China that after due consultations among the delegations, the IPF will recommend the most viable options for the CSD's adoption. In this regard, it may be necessary to consider interim arrangements for the implementation of the programmes recommended by the IPF in the short-term in order to allow for dialogue for medium to long term arrangements for other instruments in further implementation of the Forest Principles.

Mr. Chairman,

I wish you and all the delegates attending the IPF great success in your deliberations of the agenda items before you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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