

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY M.W. MANGACHI, MINISTER
PLENIPOTENTIARY IN THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE INTERSESSIONAL AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP
OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

New York, 24 February 1997

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, to extend to you and to the Co-Chairmen, our warmest congratulations on your well deserved election. We are confident that under your able leadership the deliberations of this meeting will be conducted efficiently and reach useful conclusions. We assure you of our full cooperation.

I should also like to commend the Secretary General of the UN and his dedicated staff in the secretariat, particularly in the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development for preparing the valuable and useful documents before us and making them available to delegations on time.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China attaches great importance to this process of consultations which are starting today in preparation for both CSD V and the Special Session of the UN GA scheduled for June, 1997 to review and appraise the implementation of Agenda 21. The UNCED review process provides governments with a unique opportunity to reiterate the commitments and the necessity of sustainable patterns of development.

The commitments agreed at UNCED in 1992 forged a new partnership for international cooperation in recognition of the fact that the goals and objectives of sustainable development could not be achieved without all nations agreeing to act together to preserve the global environment. UNCED also recognized the special situation and needs of developing countries, particularly the LDCs and urged that these countries should be given priority when implementing environmental programs. It was further stressed that in view of their different capacities and contributions to environmental degradation, states have common but differentiated responsibilities in redressing the problem of our common environment. These are still important principles in ensuring an equitable distribution of these environmental responsibilities.

Mr. Chairman,

Notable efforts have been made in the implementation of Agenda 21 in various countries. At the international level, it is gratifying to note that a number of international environmental conventions were concluded. These include the Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Bio-diversity and the Convention on Desertification and Drought. The conclusion of these environmental conventions is a demonstration of the resolve of the international community to address seriously the environmental questions in various fields. However, the record of implementation of these legal instruments and other environmental programmes is so far unsatisfactory, basically due to lack of adequate resources and the reluctance of countries with the needed environmentally-sound technologies, to make them available to developing countries on concessional and grant terms.

Concerning resources, it was estimated that the implementation of Agenda 21 would require about US \$.125 billion, in additional resources to put the world on the path to sustainable development. This sum was considered to be too huge; instead the GEF was established as the main funding mechanism with initial capital of US \$ 2 billion over a three year period. This is obviously insignificant in comparison with the total bill needed to undertake the critical environmental programmes. There is thus a need for increasing resources to correspond to the task of placing future global environmental development on a sustainable path. The GEF should also expand the scope and coverage of environmental issues beyond the existing priorities of climate change, bio-diversity, international waters and ozone layer. Furthermore, the disbursement terms for GEF funds should be improved to make them easily accessible to developing countries. In addition to GEF, the CSD should consider the establishment of funding mechanism for each environmental convention.

Another means of supporting environmental programs is through ODA. In this regard developed countries should meet the ODA targets and beyond, as previously agreed and provide additional bilateral assistance to developing countries.

In a wider context, measures must be taken to enable developing countries to increase earnings, through means such as restoring commodity prices together with improvement in the access of these countries to the markets of developed countries particularly for the export goods and services in which they have a comparative advantage. The creditor countries and international financial institutions should also adopt an effective, comprehensive, proactive and development-oriented solution to the debt issue, including measures such as debt reduction, debt swaps, debt cancellation and increased grants and concessional financial flows.

Mr. Chairman,

Regarding technology transfer, UNCED underscored the critical role of environmentally safe technologies in the attainment of the ultimate goal of sustainable development. However, the process of making technological information available to developing countries as well as technology transfer has been extremely slow. The developing countries need to access urgently to these technologies if they are to fulfil their obligations under Agenda 21. These technologies are currently out of reach of the majority of developing countries because of their high costs and even more constraining is the lack of infrastructure and institutional capacities. It is regretted that to-date there are no internationally agreed modalities on how to transfer technology from developed countries to developing countries. In this context CSD may wish to revisit the proposal of setting up an international clearing house for environmentally-safe technologies to be made available to developing countries at concessional rates. Such a mechanism, could also facilitate easy access to useful technologies which are in the public domain. Meanwhile, developed countries, relevant international institutions should endeavour to provide developing countries with needed technologies including support for manpower development and capacity building.

Mr. Chairman,

One of the major themes of Agenda 21, to which the G.77 and China attaches great importance is the eradication of poverty. Many developing countries, particularly the LDCs, are experiencing the twin problem of widespread poverty and environmental degradation. The rate of depletion of forests in these poor countries is particularly alarming. The message of forest preservation will thus take long to reach people there, if measures to provide them with alternative technologies are not taken on an urgent basis. We therefore reiterate that CSD should continue focusing its work on the linkage between poverty and environmental protection and ensure that more assistance is directed towards poverty alleviation projects and programmes.

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to conclude by stressing that the cross-cutting issues of financial resources, transfer of technology, trade and investments and poverty alleviation should be given adequate attention in the preparatory process for UNGA Special Session. We are convinced that unless these issues are resolved, the goal of attaining sustainable development will be difficult to achieve.

Thank you.