

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 BY AMBASSADOR DAUDI N. MWAKAWAGO  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, CHAIRMAN OF  
THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE AD-HOC WORKING GROUP OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON AN  
AGENDA FOR DEVELOPMENT

New York, 11 February 1997

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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like on behalf of the Group of 77, to take this opportunity to congratulate both Ambassador Percy Mangoela of Lesotho and Ambassador Michael Powless of New Zealand, on their appointment to the challenging task of co-chairing the Working Group on Agenda for Development. It is our sincere hope that under their able co-chairmanship, the Working Group will be able to accomplish its task in a very fruitful manner. I want to assure both of them of my fullest cooperation and that of the Group of 77.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 having participated very actively in the negotiations for the Agenda for Development for the last four years, attaches great importance to an early and successful conclusion of the negotiations particularly chapter three. We believe that a successful negotiated agenda will not only promote an integrated approach to development aimed at strengthening international cooperation, provide a framework for the implementation of the results of the major UN conferences, but would also enhance the future role of the UN in development as well as give pointers to the direction the reform of the UN will take.

The Group of 77 notes with disappointment that for the last four years, the Working Group has not been able to reach an agreement even on the definition of the word "development" while negotiating chapter one and two. Increasingly we have witnessed reluctance to relaunch the debate on economic growth in developing countries as well as to recognize the need to restructure international economic relations, to ensure that developing countries could effectively participate in decision making; instead the thrust and focus of our negotiations has been on UN reforms. But if those issues and concerns are not addressed the very relevance of the United Nations will be called to question. For the plight of two thirds of the members of the Organization and world community is at stake.

Mr. Chairman,

In view of the above this opportunity should not be missed. As we are preparing to embark on our discussions on chapter three dealing with institutional issues and follow-up. The Group of 77 would like at this stage to express three particular concerns:

Firstly, the role of the United Nations as a locus of high level political dialogue on economic issues and on development has been overshadowed by overemphasis on peacekeeping, humanitarian and human rights issues. Although the issues are important they are only the symptoms. The United Nations has to address the root causes of the majority of peace and security violations. It is economic impoverishment and lack of equity in national development.

Secondly, in recent years, the impression cannot also be avoided that the role of the United Nations in global economic issues and development policies has somewhat eroded in comparison to the World Bank, IMF and WTO.

And lastly but not least, it is true that the UN Secretariat that deal with economic issues have generally weakened. This has been due to shift of focus and warped resource flows.

Mr. Chairman,

I do not have to belabour the extent to which international conflict, and indeed conflict within nations, is to a large degree a result of economic and social decline. Thus if the UN is to fully carry out its mandate as called for by the Charter, a certain balance and parallelism on these issues is inevitably necessary.

We are aware of the skepticism that some industrialised countries feel towards the UN as a forum for global economic issues. Thus, the core economic issues of macroeconomic policies, finance, debt, trade, monetary issues and technology have given way significantly to "soft issues" (environment, drugs, etc.) in the UN bodies.

Mr. Chairman,

A balance between economic growth and development on the one hand and social and environment issues on the other, is important. Without economic growth and accelerated development, the resources required to deal with environment and social problems will simply not be available.

Mr. Chairman,

While the Group of 77 hopes that the Agenda for Development will conclude in an expeditious manner, there will have to be greater clarity in the focus on objectives for the Agenda. The United Nations for whatever reasons cannot afford to renege on agreed positions negotiated very laboriously at the world major conferences. Indeed the Agenda would be incomplete if those concerns are not taken on board.

Mr. Chairman,

In conclusion, let me state that after taking stock of the two chapters which already have been negotiated, it is the view of the Group of 77, that before we proceed to chapter three, it is important to resolve our differences in the pending paragraphs in chapter one and two, particularly para 1, 1 bis and para 31. We believe that this is the only way to move forward expeditiously. Globalisation and liberalisation dominate the world's economic relations. But it is vitally important that there is a correct interpretation of the same and a suitable policy response is put in place. During the coming weeks the Group of 77 will play its part in making positive contribution to the debate and negotiations that will take place.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.