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SEVENTY-SEVEN
Group of 77

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LEADERS INAUGURATE SECOND SOUTH SUMMIT OF THE GROUP OF 77 IN DOHA

**His Highness the Emir of Qatar announces a donation of \$20 million
to a “South Fund for Development and Human Circumstances ”**

**The strengthening of South-South cooperation and the UN reform at the
centre stage of the inaugural ceremony**

Doha, 15 June 2005 --- The leaders of the 132 Member States of the Group of 77 inaugurated this morning in Doha, Qatar, the Second South Summit of the Group of 77 at the level of Heads of State and Government.

In presence of the delegations of the 132 Member States and the Executive Secretary of the Group of 77, the following dignitaries addressed the Summit this morning: His Highness Sheikh Hamad Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar and host of the Summit; the Most Honorable P.J. Patterson, Prime Minister of Jamaica and President of the Group of 77; His Excellency Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; His Excellency Mr. Carlos Lage, Vice President of the Council of State and Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers of Cuba; His Excellency Dato Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi; Prime Minister of Malaysia and Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The President of the General Assembly of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping; the Minister of Cooperation and Humanitarian Action of Luxembourg, on behalf of the European Union, His Excellency Mr. Jean-Louis Schiltz; and the representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Her Excellency Ms. Louise Fréchette, also made a statement.

Addressing the participants during the inaugural ceremony, His Highness Sheikh Hamad Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar and host of the Summit indicated that “Qatar has given special attention to the question of aid because it believes in the importance of supporting the efforts and initiatives aimed at economic and social development and addressing famine and poverty in the world”. In this context, His Highness the Emir announced his country’s “commitment to give the prescribed percentage of its GDP as development aid, with allocating 15% of that percentage to the least developed countries, effective from the year 2006”. By doing so, Qatar “urges the countries of the North and the capable countries of the South to raise the level of their aid”.

Moreover, His Highness Sheik Hamad Khalifa Al-Thani urged the Summit to approve the establishment of a “Fund for economic, social health and educational development, and to address the problems of hunger, poverty, and human catastrophes that may be called “The South Fund for Development and Human Circumstances”. The State of Qatar, he added, “is pleased to announce its willingness to donate 20 million Dollars to this Fund”.

The Prime Minister of Jamaica and President of the Group of 77, the Most Honorable PJ Patterson, stated that the “review of the millennium development goals clearly established that we are not on target and a dramatic effort will be needed if our expectations are to be met”. Referring to South-South cooperation, the Prime minister and President of the Group of 77 noted some successes, including a spread and strengthening of regional economic groupings and cooperation arrangements, not only within regions, but across continents; he also pointed out to an increase of the trade volume among developing countries from 40% to 50%. Mr. Patterson also stressed that South-South bilateral projects are beginning to make a positive difference in crucial areas such as health, education, energy, and construction.

Prime Minister Patterson made it clear however that “within our Group, we have not adequately exploited the potential for cooperation. South-South cooperation should not be an empty slogan. Instead of more meetings, we need to establish contacts and identify avenues for greater cooperation and develop mechanisms for promotion and implementation of projects. The Honorable P.J. Patterson insisted that “the message from Doha must be loud and clear: We must enlarge the dialogue between North and South. We gather in Doha as the G-8 prepares to hold its Summit next month. We always meet separately. What is the reason why we can never meet together for common dialogue?”, he asked.

Referring to the reform of the multilateral system, Mr.Patterson said that the Doha Plan of Action for 2005 outlines the critical need to ensure that the in the reform of the United Nations, development is given high priority as it is a fundamental underpinning to achieving the overall goals and objectives of the United Nations”. According to Mr. Patterson, the success of the reform will depend on its concentration on the fundamentals, namely the challenges facing the majority of mankind: the struggle for survival against its most dangerous enemies, poverty, ignorance, and the ravages of hunger and disease.

The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency Chief Olusegun Obasanjo expressed his concern that “five years after the First Summit in 2000, we have achieved less than 5% in the implementation of the Havana Programme of Action. This second meeting is therefore an opportunity to take stock of our progress, identify obstacles and challenges that impede our effectiveness, and consider the policy options that will enable us to advance rapidly with implementation”. Referring to the upcoming Summit in the United Nations, President Obasanjo said that the Doha Summit “must pronounce itself unequivocally on the issue of development, peace and security. In Nigeria’s view, underdevelopment is the gravest threat to peace and security...” he added. Talking about NEPAD, the Nigerian President said “it

is imperative that developing countries contribute meaningfully to the implementation” of this initiative, as success in this regard would usher new hope in the efficacy of South-South cooperation.

President Obasanjo concluded by calling for the strengthening of the institutions of the Group of 77. “The Secretariat of the Group of 77 as well as the South Center should be adequately funded to position themselves as our power houses for service delivery, knowledge, and information, professionalism and excellence”.

Reading a message on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Republic of Cuba to the participants in the Second South Summit, the Vice President of the Council of State and Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers of Cuba, His Excellency Mr. Carlos Lage said that “ today’s economic order includes our nations in exploitation schemes and excludes them from development plans...The future of Humanity cannot be this unjustifiable and unsustainable world...”However, said Mr. Lage, “let us, who have always been excluded, join efforts to establish a just, equitable and sustainable world order and preserve the United Nations and make it serve the people”.

The Prime Minister of Malaysia and Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, His Excellency Dato Seri Abudllah Ahmad Badawi, said that the “future for the developing countries lies in a strong and robust multilateral system, based upon the principles of international law”. Three objectives should therefore be secured, he indicated:” to ensure that the process of reform of the United Nations results in a strengthening of the multilateral system; to ensure that development remains at the top of the agenda of international dialogue; and to secure a restructuring of the international economic system in order to rectify the inherent asymmetries of power in the system”.

The Heads of State and Government of the Group of 77 will reconvene this afternoon for their first working session. They will hold a general debate on development challenges facing the South, with special reference to the high-level plenary meeting of the 60 th Session of the General Assembly.
