

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY AMBASSADOR MAKARIM WIBISONO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDONESIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE JOINT MEETING OF EXECUTIVE BOARDS OF UNDP, UNFPA AND UNICEF ON "THE IMPACT OF THE UNITED NATIONS REFORM ON THE FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES"

New York, 26 January 1998

Mr. President,

Let me begin by expressing, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, our sincere appreciation to the Administrator of UNDP, Executive Director of UNICEF and the representative of the Executive Director of UNFPA for their introductory remarks and comments on the discussion of this agenda item entitled "Impact of the United Nations reform on the funds and programmes" at the first joint meeting of Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF. Indeed this joint meeting could provide us with a new opportunity to improve the intergovernmental oversight mechanism on the work of the United Nations Funds and Programmes in the pursuit of their respective mandates.

Mr. President,

The Group of 77 and China would also like to reiterate that it attaches great importance to the operational activities for development of the United Nations development system because of their unique and critical role in supporting the development efforts of the developing countries. The current situation reflects the dramatic changes in the world economy as well as in the nature of development itself which is now characterized by greater political and economic openness. The demands on the United Nations have expanded over time and many of them are reflected in the mandates emanating from global conferences. Despite these growing needs, the key funds and programmes of the United Nations continue to face a declining trend and lack of predictability and reliability in their core contributions. Obviously, if this situation persists the rising needs of the recipient countries in meeting their development goals and the ability of the United Nations development system to fulfill its mandate would be seriously jeopardized. We were told that the reform effort will lead to the increase of funding. But the fact is that this has not proven to be the case.

Against this backdrop, the Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate that many efforts, including detailed measures, have already been undertaken through valuable guidance of various resolutions and decisions in order to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the United Nations funds and programmes and the implementation of their operational activities. In addition, the recent adoption of the Secretary-General's proposal on reform has also sought to strengthen the coordination of the various funds and programmes either at headquarters or the field level through the establishment of the UNDG and UNDAF.

In that context, the Group of 77 and China would like to emphasize that, considering the distinctive characteristics and legislative mandates of each of these funds and programmes, the convening of this first joint meeting of their Executive Boards should confine its discussions to issues that are common to all of these entities. Furthermore, the Group of 77 and China considers that this meeting could serve as a basis for further strengthening individual and collective capacities so as to effectively respond to their common policy directives and requirements. It could also serve to increase the positive impact of development cooperation in the development process of the recipient countries.

For that reason, the Group of 77 and China supports the efforts of the Secretary-General already underway to group together the various funds, programmes and other entities of the United Nations engaged in development into a newly formed group to be called the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) which is to be chaired by the Administrator of the UNDP. Moreover, the Group of 77 and China notes that the

establishment of UNDG is obviously intended to maintain and reinforce the distinctive identities of the participating organizations, while encouraging coordination and integration both at headquarters and in the field. However, it should be noted that the Group of 77 and China, as the main recipients of development cooperation, are primarily concerned with the quality, efficiency and volume of assistance rather than that of institutional arrangements. Simplicity of program delivery is important, but we do not see any merit in pursuing the process of integration of the various entities as an end in itself.

As to the United Nations Development Assistance Fund (UNDAF) which is also under discussion at this meeting and a key component of Secretary-General's proposal on the development cooperation, we also note that it is now being implemented in pilot schemes in 19 countries. It may therefore be a little premature to assess the success and the failure of these programmes. Moreover, it is also important that, in drawing on the lessons of these pilot projects, the views of the recipient governments should also be heard in addition of the views of the UN system. In this context, it is important to recall what has already been clearly stated by the G-77 and China when we discussed the reform proposal of the Secretary-General on the question of counterpart arrangement of the UNDAF at the country level as well as the mechanism for the presentation of credentials of the resident coordinator to the host government. Therefore, we believe that the implementation of the reform should take into account the specific needs of each region and country.

Lastly, Mr. President, the Group of 77 and China would like to reemphasize once again that it remains seriously concerned with the continuing downward trend of core resources which has resulted in the failure of the United Nations Funds and Programmes, particularly that of the UNDP, to meet their mandated programme target and new requirements in providing the necessary technical assistance to the developing countries. In this context, the Group of 77 and China noted that in the context of the reform process, the Secretary-General is requested to propose a new system of core resources. We would like to stress that any proposal in this regard should not increase or add any new burden to developing countries. At the same time, it is important that such proposals should not incur conditionality which would only serve to undermine the fundamental characteristic of the operational activities of the United Nations development system including its universality, neutrality as well as its voluntary and grant nature.

Thank you.