

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR. ALI ALATAS, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA, CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE COORDINATING BUREAU OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT

Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, 18-20 May 1998

Mr. Chairman,

It is a distinct honour and privilege for me to address this ministerial Coordinating Bureau Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement. I should like to express on behalf of the Group of 77 our deep gratitude to the Government and people of Colombia for their generous hospitality and the excellent arrangements made for this meeting.

I should also like to pay tribute to you and the Government of Colombia for the outstanding contributions made in providing leadership to the Non-Aligned Movement during the past three years. Your tenure at the helm of the Movement has been of special significance to my delegation as the current Chairman of the Group of 77. In this capacity, my Delegation has enjoyed a close and fruitful relationship with your Delegation in the context of our shared responsibility as Co-Chairs of the Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77.

Mr. Chairman,

As is customary at this gathering of the developing countries, we shall not only engage in assessing the global economic situation of the world, but also endeavour to forge common approaches and to coordinate the positions of the Group of 77 and NAM, particularly in the field of economic and social development. The profound and rapid changes which are transforming the world compel us to constantly enhance our solidarity and unity in pursuing our collective goals for equitable development and peace.

The events of the past few years have underscored the important role of both the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 in advancing the positions and defending the interests of the developing countries in facing the multitude of global issues. It is true that, as a Movement and as a Group, we have been able to make considerable progress in that regard. Our concerted efforts, however, are today needed more than ever if we are to meet the challenges facing us and as we prepare to enter the new millennium.

The external environment for the developing countries continue to be aggravated by stark imbalances and inequities. It is true that a few developing countries have managed to continue to make economic progress despite the adverse global economic environment. Most, however, remain caught in the grip of economic stagnation and trapped in poverty and structural under-development. And the severe financial-economic crisis that has recently afflicted some of the countries of East and Southeast Asia has further exacerbated the plight of the developing countries as a whole.

International economic relations are most definitely power relations. It is not easy for those countries which currently dominate in the prevailing international system to accept reforms aimed at correcting the prevailing economic and institutional inequalities. Only through determined joint action by the countries of the South, based on clear development strategies, optimal utilization of their resources and capabilities and solid mutual solidarity and cooperation, will there be possibilities for changing the current international economic system.

Clearly much needs to be done. The challenges are many and formidable. In an ever more integrated and interdependent world, problems and issues are becoming increasingly interlinked and their resolution cannot

be achieved through piecemeal reforms or on an ad hoc basis. Rather, such problems, imbalances and inequities should be addressed comprehensively and globally.

While the cold war is over, the world continues to be faced with adverse political and economic conditions militating against our aspirations for equitable development and requiring our continued partnership and solidarity. It is in this regard, therefore, that the Non-Aligned Movement as the conceptual core of the G-77, must continue to assert its role in world affairs, particularly on those matters of vital interest to its constituency. The Group of 77 and the NAM must strive to ensure for a continuously changing world and as we reform and restructure institutions and mechanisms which have played an important role as vehicles for the fulfillment of our aspirations, priority for the attainment of the social and economic objectives of our peoples must be maintained.

Mr. Chairman,

In a world characterized by the globalization of the international economy and deepening interdependence among economies, the need for the international community to embark upon constructive and mutually beneficial international cooperation for economic growth and development becomes an urgent requirement. As the Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement have observed on many occasions, lasting peace and security cannot be assured nor maintained in the absence of sustained economic growth and development in the developing countries.

The diversity and complexity of the issues facing our Movement today will continue to require the political will of our governments and our peoples if we are to prevail. And we can only prevail in unity, while conversely, in disunity we will inevitably fall into disarray and failure. The Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77, representing the overwhelming part of humanity, have an historical responsibility to work together in the pursuit of the deals and objectives they hold in common. The challenges we all face call for a clear vision and joint action. Today we have the opportunity to act together.

The long-awaited peace dividend arising from the end of East-West contention and the costly arms race, has failed to materialize. Protectionism, especially against access of developing country exports to the markets of the developed countries, external debt and debt-service burdens, declining external resources flow to developing countries including the shifting of focus of development resources within the UN System at the expense of developing countries, the need for greater and equitable access to technologies, all continue to undermine the development efforts of developing countries.

In the new post cold war era, we see no alternative to engaging the developed countries in a constructive dialogue and equal partnership on the need to revitalize economic growth and regenerate multilateral economic cooperation for development. For many years, the Group of 77, in coordination with the Non-Aligned Movement, have called for the resumption of the North-South dialogue to promote economic growth and development. Learning from the lessons of the past, however, that dialogue must now embrace a new, more practicable orientation to ensure its success. Such a dialogue must be based on the economic imperatives of mutual interests and benefits, genuine interdependence and equitably shared responsibilities.

I should like to take this opportunity to call for the full and effective participation of developing countries in the process of decision-making and in the resolution of world economic problems through the strengthening of multilateralism and implementing effective mechanisms of multilateral cooperation aimed at promoting equitable growth in the world economy. I strongly believe that sustained and sustainable economic growth and political progress of the developing countries are among the main priority objectives which should be pursued by the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

Due to the present world economic situation, the question of intensifying South-South cooperation must continue to be our major concern. In this connection, there should be no more doubt as to the indispensability of collective self-reliance as a vital means, not only for accelerating our own development efforts, but also for enhancing our collective capacity to engage the North in meaningful dialogue.

The main focus for intensifying South-South cooperation centers on the Caracas Programme of Action (CPA) and the Action Programme on Economic Cooperation of the Non-Aligned Movement (APEC). While the implementation of these two programmes have yielded some results, much more needs to be done. In this regard the question of harmonizing both programmes were squarely faced at the Eighth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordinating Committee on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (IFCC-IX) held in Manila in January 1996. In doing so, the Committee rightly recommended to the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) to consolidate and coordinate its activities on various issues and in various forums, including harmonizing the respective South-South programs of the Group of 77 and the NAM.

With the increasing obstacles in the way of our economic development, with the growing complementarities among developing economies, yet, on the other hand, the need for ECDC and TCDC have become even more urgent and relevant today than it was at the beginning of the decade when the Caracas Programme of Action was launched.

While it is true that we must provide greater momentum to ECDC activities we should guard against the risk of undertaking projects without fully assessing their potential. Indeed, this can greatly harm the very cause that we seek to promote. We must at all times remember that ECDC projects must provide mutual benefits to developing countries and should be economically viable. This issue will be addressed in depth at the G-77 High-level Conference on Sub-regional and Regional Economic Cooperation that is scheduled to be held in Bali, Indonesia, from 10-14 August 1998.

It is my conviction that primary attention should be focused on those sectors which have shown promise in the light of our experience. These include, among others, trade, finance, science, technology and technical cooperation. There is an urgent need to intensify South-South cooperation in those areas within the framework of CPA and APEC. Both the IFCC of the G-77 and the Standing Ministerial Committee (SMC) of the NAM should launch a common programme to strengthen South-South cooperation. The time has come to mandate the Joint Coordinating Committee of these Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 (JCC) to undertake a process of harmonization of the two programmes.

Mr. Chairman,

It has become increasingly evident that both the Group of 77 and the NAM should articulate a global strategy that may enable us to respond adequately to the rapid changes that are taking place on the world scene and which may translate into a stronger negotiating capacity. Otherwise we will continue to be progressively marginalized, especially in the decision-making processes within the global economy.

I also remain deeply convinced of the continued validity and importance of the Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement as vital instruments to articulate and promote the collective economic and political interests of the developing countries.

The solidarity of developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America and Caribbean rests on its historical bonds of common struggle and the recognition that despite our diversity, only joint and coherent action will enable our countries to deal with the challenges of the year 2000 and beyond. I am fully confident that the developing countries will be able to meet these challenges.

G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77
G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77
