



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY AMBASSADOR DUMISANI S. KUMALO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 104: APPOINTMENT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS, IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS (New York, 13 October 2006)

President of the General Assembly, H.E. Sheika Haya Rashed Al Khalifa
Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan
Secretary-General-elect, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon
Your Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I am honored to extend our congratulations to Mr. Ban Ki-Moon on his election as the Secretary-General of the United Nations starting 1 January 2007.

The Group of 77 and China wishes to convey our assurance to him of our support throughout his term in Office.

Madam President,

The United Nations has weathered many storms over the past decades. The Organization has survived because of the stewardship of a long line of strong Secretaries-General who have always acted in the interests of the Organization and remained neutral and committed to the ideals as set out in the Charter of the United Nations.

We are encouraged by the assurances that we have received from Mr. Ban Ki-Moon that he intends to build on the foundation set by Secretary-General Kofi Annan and his predecessors.

Madam President,

In 2000 the Heads of State and Government committed themselves in the Millennium Declaration into making this Organization stronger so as to be able to respond better to the many demands that we continue to place on it. Since then, we have made considerable progress in meeting the ambitions of the people of the world, especially the poor and the marginalized. However, a great deal remains to be done.

The challenge for the new Secretary-General will be to consolidate the progress made so far by ensuring that the Secretariat of the UN implements the decisions and mandates of the Organization thereby maintaining the momentum we have built so far, and well into the future.

The Group of 77 and China believes that the Development Agenda is an important pillar for this Organization and one where considerable effort is still needed. It, therefore, was encouraging to us that Mr. Ban Ki-Moon prior to his election committed himself to advancing the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. I wish to assure him that the Group of 77 and China will support his efforts as Secretary-General in strengthening the global partnership on development.

Madam President,

The United Nations matters to us because it is located at the crossroads of the needs and desires of humanity. Without the United Nations many of the people throughout the world would not have any hope for a better life. It is therefore in our interest to ensure that the Organization is effective, well-managed and accountable to Member States.

For this reason, it is imperative that the Secretary-General-elect acts in the interests of the entire membership and listens to the views of each and every Member State. It is also imperative that Member States, in turn, "respect the exclusively international character of the responsibilities of the Secretary-General and the staff and not seek to influence them in the discharge of their duties", as stated in Article 100 of the Charter.

Madam President,

Unlike previous occasions, the General Assembly has elected the incoming Secretary-General well before he is expected to assume his responsibilities. We trust that the election of the Secretary-General in advance of assuming office will allow for sufficient consultations with Member States and staff in order to prepare for the task ahead and

ensure a smooth transition.

It is a pleasant irony that the decision by the General Assembly to elect the President of the Assembly and other office bearers was one of the reforms undertaken at the time the Republic of Korea occupied the Presidency of the General Assembly and in which Mr. Ban Ki-moon served as Chef de Cabinet.

Madam President,

In conclusion, allow me to take this opportunity to convey our warm wishes and congratulations to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his sterling service to the United Nations. The Organisation and its membership owe him a tremendous amount of gratitude and we will continue to support his efforts until his last day with this Organization. At the appropriate time, we will recall the contributions of Mr. Annan to the Organization and pay tribute to him for having kept faith with the poor and the marginalized of the world despite all the pressures he faced. For now, we wish to once again welcome Mr. Ban Ki-moon and wish him the best.

I thank you.