



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. ABDULLA EID SALMAN AL-SULAITI, DELEGATION OF THE STATE OF QATAR, AT THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS: PRIORITY THEME: IMPROVING PUBLIC-SECTOR EFFECTIVENESS; AND MODALITIES FOR THE REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE MADRID INTERNATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION ON AGEING, 2002 (New York, 4 February 2004)**

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to congratulate you for your assumption of the Chairmanship of our Commission. I would like also to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and to assure you of our full support and cooperation. Let me also take this opportunity to thank the Secretariat for the reports submitted to our Commission particularly reports contained in documents E/CN.5/2004/5 and E/CN.5/2004/6, which are very informative and comprehensive on Priority theme: improving public-sector effectiveness; and Modalities for the review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002.

Mr. Chairman,

The commitments adopted by the Copenhagen Summit as well as those which resulted from other UN major conferences and summits, in particular the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and the Beijing Conference, offer the international community today a clear roadmap that can guide our actions and channel our efforts towards the implementation of commitments conducive to a harmonious social development as stressed in the General Assembly resolution adopted at its 58th Session.

The Group of 77 and China considers that at a time when the developing countries are continuing to make significant efforts regarding economic and social reforms, particularly in the public sector despite various and enormous constraints, it is on developed countries to accompany those efforts by committing to their own obligations for development. Indeed, based on principles of solidarity, partnership and shared but differentiated responsibility, the developed countries, more than ever before, are called upon fully to contribute to these efforts through measures including, in particular, the increase of official development assistance, the reduction in the foreign debt of developing countries, the promotion of direct foreign investments in developing countries and support to UN Funds to combat major pandemics, such as HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Chairman,

In an era of global economic prosperity and major advances in science and technology, poverty remains one of the biggest challenges facing humanity. It is a grim situation on a global scale that almost one fourth of the world population; that is, one and a half billion human beings, live on less than \$ 1 a day. We all know that poverty is a very complex phenomenon. It relates not only to low income but also to low achievement in such social sectors as employment, education, housing, health and nutrition. Poverty manifests itself in different forms and involves a set of multisectoral social components as stressed in the Madrid Plan of Action.

In this context, the public sector plays a vital role in national policies for social development including poverty eradication as stressed in the Secretary-General's report. In this regard, we support the Secretary-General's recommendations while we recognize at the same time the importance of a strengthened international cooperation, good governance at all levels, transparency and accountability in improving public sector.

I should seize this opportunity to state that the Group of 77 and China views poverty as the most pervasive violation of human and development rights. An effective and meaningful global campaign against the scourge of poverty requires that this problem be placed at the center of national strategies and international cooperation. National governments through the public sector particularly have a pivotal role to play in this regard.

In this highly interdependent world, successful pursuit of national social policies need to be supported by a conducive, enabling international environment. In fact, the whole international community needs implement concerted policies, in a mutually supportive manner in order to ensure making concrete progress toward the realization of the established international goals and targets. In this context, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report, international financial institutions should recognize the importance of the public sector when they are making recommendations on macroeconomic policies and implementing various programmes related to development and poverty eradication.

In this regard, the Group of 77 and China commends the positive response of the international community to support the establishment of a world solidarity fund to promote economic and social development. Reiterating our full support, we believe this fund would complement commitments made by the international community to eradicate poverty and would help alleviate the resource deficit in this regard, particularly to vulnerable groups, such as older persons.

Mr. Chairman,

The challenges posed by globalization to developing countries have, without doubt, a profound impact in their ability to respond to the social needs of their populations. The obstacles that still remain to the full participation by developing countries in the global economy translates into increasing poverty and marginalization, which in turn means less resources available to social programmes specifically directed to older persons. This situation needs to be reversed if we are to guarantee that older persons around the world have equal opportunities and that they enjoy a secure, healthy life as they age. Therefore, it is also crucial for developing countries to be able to deal with problems such as external debt. Likewise, it is essential that developed countries fulfil their commitments and continue supporting the efforts of developing countries through international cooperation and partnership as clearly indicated in the recommendations of the Secretary-General.

In this context, the Group of 77 and China would like to emphasize that the principal responsibility for designing and implementing structural adjustment programs remains with the national governments, which must be satisfied that these programmes represent the appropriate course of action for ensuring the sustained growth of their countries and command the political and social support necessary for the adjustment process. We reiterate that the social, political, and economic realities as well as development priorities of the developing countries must be the central element in the design and implementation of adjustment programmes offered by international financial institutions. In this context, we underline the fact that the sustainability of structural adjustment programmes requires a favourable international environment, sufficient external finance, and effective measures by the international community to enable developing countries to promote social development programmes.

In this context, let me once again on behalf of the Group of 77 and China reiterate our support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in order to achieve the eradication of poverty and promotion of economic and social development in Africa. We call on the developed countries and the United Nations system to support the Partnership and complement the efforts undertaken by Africa to overcome the challenges of development.

Mr. Chairman,

The critical situation in which many older persons live throughout the developing world makes urgent the need to work towards the promotion and protection of their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Older persons face numerous challenges that need to be addressed in order to ensure their full participation in society. They need to be supported and encouraged in accordance with the provisions of the Madrid Plan of Action. As developing countries, we are fully prepared to share our part of responsibility by implementing the Madrid Plan of Action and providing the public sector a pivotal role to play in this process. Meanwhile, I would like to take this opportunity to call on our development partners to intensify international cooperation which is crucial for the effective implementation of the provisions of the Madrid Plan of Action as well as for the promotion of social development.

I thank you.