



STATEMENT BY H.E. STAFFORD NEIL, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, ON THE DRAFT OUTCOME DOCUMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR THE HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 21 June 2005)

General Comments

On behalf of the G77 and China, I would like to thank you Mr President for having convened this meeting. Let me begin by acknowledging your efforts and the efforts of your Facilitators in preparing the draft outcome document before us. We believe it provides a useful basis for our preparations for the High-level Plenary meeting of the General Assembly in September. I will address the development cluster of the proposed outcome document as well as the section concerning the UN Secretariat. There are more specific ideas on other issues raised in the document which we hope to convey to you in the near future.

By way of general comments, let me reiterate the importance which the G77 and China attaches to the issue of development. We wish to underscore that development should be considered as a basic and fundamental issue in all its dimensions. The September Summit should therefore comprehensively address the critical development issues and give priority attention should be given to the full implementation of the commitments reflected in the outcomes of all major UN summits and conferences.

Second, Mr President, let me briefly touch on the structure of the development cluster of the document. There are some issues addressed in the text which we believe merit special attention on their own. I speak of debt, trade and other systemic issues. We propose that these issues be treated on their own merit and not simply as sub-items on financing for development. We would request that this be corrected as we have proposed.

Third, we underscore the importance of the principle of inclusiveness. The process on which we have embarked should take into account the concern of all states.

Values and Principles

Mr President,

There are some important principles which the G77 and China believes should be more forcefully addressed in this section of the document. Our specific proposal would be to replace paragraph 2 as follows:

“We reaffirm that in our endeavours we are guided by all the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and by full respect for the principles of international law. To this end, we agree to uphold the principles of sovereignty and sovereign equality of States, territorial integrity and non-intervention in the internal affairs of any State; to take measures for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of peace and encourage the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered; to refrain in international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State or in any means inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations; develop friendly relations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples; achieve international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character; and to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.”

Priority attention should also be given to the issue of implementation. For this reason, we propose the following language for paragraph 3 of the document:

“We emphasise that the commitments undertaken in the outcomes of all major United Nations conferences and summits and their implementation constitute a coherent development agenda, and call on all countries to fulfill and implement all commitments made at these conferences and summits and serve as a guide for the work of the United Nations in the economic, social, human rights, environmental and related fields”

Finally and as stated previously, we believe that greater attention should be given in this section to the importance of addressing development on its own merit and to the critical which the UN can play in advancing this objective.

II. Development

Global partnership for development

Mr President,

The G77 and China believes that there are several critical issues which must be addressed in this section of the document. Paragraph 12 correctly draws attention to the slow and uneven implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

We should also explicitly acknowledge the need to address good governance and combat corruption at both national and international levels.

We would further recommend that the reference in paragraph 13 to a global partnership for development also includes the commitments undertaken at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

Another important issue which merits the special attention and support of the international community is the need for ODA to be provided in a consistent and transparent manner for the achievement of not only the MDGs but other internationally agreed development goals. We should also address the issue of aid delivery, notably the reduction of transaction costs and the elimination of bureaucratic procedures, and ensure that these are explicitly referenced in the outcome document.

The Group would also propose language that we:

“Ensure that developing countries have the required policy space to formulate their development strategies in keeping with national development policies and strategies that reflect national priorities and are responsive to the particular circumstances of each country.”

“Stress that each country has the sovereign right to determine its own development priorities and strategies and call upon the international community to categorically reject any conditionality in the provision of development assistance.”

Financing for Development

On financing for development, we will limit our comments to all the issues raised in this section, except for trade, debt and other systemic issues which we will address under separate headings.

First, and for consistency, the chapeau language in paragraph 14 should be amended to reflect the fact that the mobilization of financial resources should be for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, not just the attainment of the latter as currently conveyed in the paragraph.

Second, we believe that there should be language reaffirming the commitment to attaining the 0.7 per cent target of GNI for ODA. In recognition of the efforts of those developed countries which have reached or exceeded the target, we would also suggest that positive language be included to this effect.

The Group supports the establishment of timetables for achieving the target. We believe that developed countries which have not done so should be urged to do so and urged to make urgent and concrete efforts to achieve the target. We would propose that this language be included in the paragraph on this issue. For this purpose we propose the establishment of an effective monitoring mechanism to ensure that the internationally agreed targets for ODA allocation by the developed countries are met.

Third, the Group would like to reiterate its concern about the use of political conditionalities in the provision of development assistance. We believe such conditionalities should be rejected and for this reason, has some concern about the call made in sub-paragraph 2 of this section for the streamlining of conditionalities. Such references should be deleted.

Fourth, we believe that efforts to enhance the quality and impact of aid should be encouraged. At this time, however, we would not be able at this time to support the specific reference to the Paris Action Plan as it is still the subject of discussion within the Group.

Fifth, the G77 and China welcomes efforts to identify new and innovative sources for financing for development, as

called for in the Monterrey Consensus. These resources should be additional and complementary to official flows and private direct investment and should promote growth and development in recipient countries. They should not be regarded as substitutes to ODA, neither should they involve additional conditionalities on developing countries .

We are ready to consider the various proposals on the table to substantially increase and promote resource flows to developing countries. In this regard, due consideration should be given to all work being undertaken on this issue, particularly by the Technical Group on Innovative Financing Mechanisms established in the framework of the world leaders meeting on “Action against Hunger and Poverty” held in New York in September 2004.

In order to improve the language in the final sub-paragraph on page 3 which deals with increased and more predictable resources, we would recommend the following:

“Recognise the need for increased and more predictable resources for financing for development, and in that regard take note with interest of international efforts, contributions and discussions aimed at identifying innovative and additional sources of financing for development.”

We also have one minor amendment to the paragraph concerning measures to be undertaken to promote and sustain adequate and stable international capital flows to developing countries. It is a typographical error so we would request that the reference to Least Developing Countries be amended to state Least Developed Countries.

On the matter of quick wins, we propose that the sub-paragraph be amended to provide more action-oriented language so that we, the international community, can agree to support the establishment and implementation of country-led ‘quick win’ initiatives. The proposed areas are by no means exhaustive. We draw attention, for example, to the issue of education and the emphasis which needs to be placed on eradicating illiteracy as part of quick win initiatives.

We also see merit in introducing another dimension to the discourse in the provision of development assistance. For this reason, we propose that we resolve to:

“Target, in the context of development assistance, the improvement of the institutional and physical infrastructure facilities of developing countries to improve their environment for both domestic and foreign investment, thereby supporting their beneficial integration in the global economy.”

The G77 welcomes the reference to the World Solidarity Fund in the President’s text. We believe it merits special consideration and would like to propose the following language to further strengthen what has been proposed by the President:

“We undertake to operationalize the World Solidarity Fund established by the General Assembly and call upon donor countries, countries in a position to do so, international organizations, the private sector and individuals to contribute to the Fund in order to allow it to contribute to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs, particularly poverty eradication.”

Debt

We believe that there is urgent need to comprehensively address the issue of debt which continues to constrain the development prospects for developing countries. We believe that in addition to the paragraph proposed in the President’s text, specific language should be included which emphasises the urgent need for the international community to comprehensively address the debt issue. We therefore propose the following:

“Emphasize the urgent need for the international community to adopt an effective, comprehensive, equitable, durable, and development-oriented solution to the debt problems of developing countries, particularly through total debt cancellation and increased concessional financial flows, as well as through debt swaps for sustainable development.”

As a Group, we are concerned about the proposal that debt sustainability should be assessed taking into account the new debt sustainability framework devised by multilateral institutions. We understand that this framework is still the subject of discussions for which a review of the existing criteria should not be ruled out. This, as well as the issue of debt ratios, merit further consideration.

Trade

International Trade remains an important engine for development. As such, we believe that trade, like debt, should

be considered independently of financing for development. We believe it should be given more expansive treatment in the outcome document along the following lines, in order to address some key principles of primary importance to developing countries. We should, in giving broad policy directions to the WTO Hong Kong Ministerial meeting later this year, agree on the need to:

Promote an open, universal, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system that gives priority to the development dimension.

Ensure that the comparative advantage of developing countries is not undermined by forms of protectionism including the arbitrary and abusive use of non-tariff measures, non-trade barriers and other standards to unfairly restrict access of developing countries products into developed countries markets and reaffirm that developing countries should play an increasing role in the formulation of, inter alia, safety, environmental and health standards.

Emphasize the importance of the strengthening and attainment of the universality of the WTO membership and, in this context, call for accelerating the accession process, in an expeditious and transparent manner, without political impediments and with full observance of the principles of special and differential treatment for developing countries in particular LDCs applying to the WTO.

Emphasize that enhanced market access for goods and services of export interest to developing countries to the markets of developed countries, as well as special and differential treatment for the developing countries, balanced rules and well-targeted sustainably financed technical assistance and capacity-building programmes for developing countries are needed for the realization of the development dimension highlighted in the Doha work Programme.

Emphasize the need to provide an immediate solution to the question of commodities, and in this context, stress the need for a more effective international arrangement to address the problems of weak and volatile commodity prices, which pose a serious constraint on sustained development in a majority of developing countries.

Work expeditiously towards integrating the development dimensions in the rule making in the intellectual property regime that is development oriented and that facilitates the transfer of technology and knowledge to developing countries, and, in this context, to undertake to also work towards a legally binding international instrument on the preservation, protection and promotion of traditional knowledge and genetic resources.

Call for accelerating the negotiations on the development-related mandate concerning the TRIPS agreement in the Doha Ministerial Declaration, especially the amendments of TRIPS Agreement in order for intellectual property rules to fully support the objectives of the convention on Biological Diversity as well as trade-related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and Public Health to address the problems afflicting many developing including least developed countries, especially those resulting from HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other epidemics.

As we have stated in the past, the focus on the WTO Doha Round should be on the expeditious and successful completion of the multilateral trade negotiations. For us, the priority is not so much on meeting the 2006 deadline for the completion of negotiations, but rather on the positive outcome of the negotiations and on ensuring that the interests of developing countries are fully reflected.

Global Governance and Systemic Issues

The G77 and China attaches particular importance to addressing global systemic inequities since they constrain the development prospects of developing countries. We therefore welcome paragraph 15 of your text which we believe provides a basis on which we can begin to redress the issue. We would recommend that the paragraph be amended to include the need for both voice and participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making and norm-setting. We also believe that the paragraph should include language in which “we call for reform of global financial architecture and global economic governance to ensure the voice and participation of developing countries as well as to ensure that global policies and processes in finance, trade, investment and technology are development oriented.”

In recognition of the important role of the UN in international economic policy-making and in promoting the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, we propose language as follows:

“We further reaffirm the need for the UN to have a more decisive and central role in international economic policy-making and in ensuring coherence, coordination and implementation of development goals and actions agreed by the international community.”

Another issue which we would like to see addressed is that of the elimination of coercive economic measures. It is

our view that the September meeting should firmly reject the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions against developing countries and reiterate the urgent need to eliminate them immediately. We should also emphasize that such actions not only undermine the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law, but also severely threaten the freedom of trade and investment. For this reason, we expect that the Summit will call on the international community to adopt urgent and effective measures to eliminate the use of unilateral coercive economic measures against developing countries.

It is also imperative that we call for the termination of foreign occupation in view of its negative impact on the development prospects of the peoples and countries so affected. If we are to make development a priority, we must address the removal of unjust and discriminatory policies which promote impoverishment. We must seek to advance the welfare of all peoples in an inclusive way.

Sustaining our environment and natural resource base for development

The G77 believes that the following principles should be highlighted in the consideration of the issues presented in this section of the document:

- First, means of implementation, namely technology transfer, capacity-building and the provision of adequate resources, should be specifically highlighted given their importance in enabling developing countries to fully and effectively undertake their international obligations with respect to promoting sustainable development;
- Second, the importance of implementing the commitments undertaken in the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa and the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- The Rio principle on the sovereign rights of states over their natural resources;
- The need to change unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, as referenced in paragraph 14 of the JPOI; and
- The need for a more comprehensive treatment of natural disasters beyond the establishment of an early warning system, as proposed below:

“We note with concern the increased incidence of natural disasters and their destructive effects on the development of developing countries, in particular small and vulnerable economies, and we call for an increased international assistance in the creation and strengthening of national, subregional, regional and international mechanisms for prevention, preparedness and mitigation of natural disasters and their effects, including through early warning systems as well as long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction. In this regard, we call on the UN system and the international community to work in close coordination to fulfill the commitments established to assist affected and disaster-prone countries, for their Governments and relevant authorities to receive the early-warning information in an unrestrictive and timely manner for their immediate and effective utilization and diffusion.”

We further call upon the UN system and the international community to support the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 in disaster-prone developing countries, including through financial and technical assistance, addressing debt sustainability, technology transfer, and public-private partnerships, and encouraging North-South and South-South cooperation.”

Throughout the text there might be opportunity to address other issues of importance to the development cluster such as the need to intensify our collective efforts for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

Science and Technology for Development

We welcome the reference in the document to the importance of science and technology in achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. We believe that:

- The global initiative to be launched should support scientific research and development to address the special needs of developing countries, thereby negating the need to specify as proposed in the document that this is being undertaken for the benefit of the poor. We would caution against any enumeration of the areas in which this research and development would be most beneficial since such a list would by no means be very

exhaustive.

- In addition to promoting, facilitating and financing access to and the development, transfer and diffusion of technologies, including environmentally sound technologies, the Group would also propose language reflecting the need for technical cooperation and capacity-building to make use of and develop new technologies.

Migration

It is important that we acknowledge the important nexus between international migration and development and the need to deal with this issue in a coordinated and coherent manner with a view to addressing the challenges and opportunities that international migration presents to countries of origin, destination and transit. This is one important component for which we believe there should be specific language. There are other elements which we would like to address at a later stage.

Other Issues

The G77 sees merit in addressing gender equality and the empowerment of women in the context of the High-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly later this year. We are still examining the proposals with a view to ensuring that the issue is adequately addressed in the context of our deliberations. For now, we will propose that in the chapeau of paragraph 20, we resolve to promote gender equality and to eliminate, not simply overcome, pervasive gender discrimination.

With respect to HIV/AIDS, we would propose at this time that in addition to the prevention, treatment and access to affordable medicines called for in the first sub-paragraph, specific language be included on resources for care and support of those affected by HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other communicable diseases. We would also recommend that throughout this section we keep focus not only HIV/AIDS but on malaria, tuberculosis and other communicable diseases for which international support and assistance are also needed.

Countries with Special Needs and meeting the special needs of Africa

The G77 supports and welcomes the emphasis in the document on countries with special needs and on the special needs of Africa. We believe that these needs should be urgently addressed, as proposed in the document, by the international community.

The UN Secretariat

The proposals by the President of the General Assembly on the reform of the Secretariat should be viewed in the context of a longer term series of reforms that were launched in 1997 and reinforced over the period including through the Secretary-General's 2002 reform package – Agenda for Further Change.

On paragraphs 90 and 91, the Group agrees with the position that the staff of the Organization should exhibit the highest levels of competence, efficiency, accountability and transparency and we support the Secretary-General in carrying out his managerial responsibility and leadership of the Organization in accordance with article 97 of the UN Charter. Member States also expect that there should be a full system of accountability in all aspects of the work of the Secretariat.

The proposal in paragraph 92 is not considered necessary at this time as there is already in place an inter-governmental mechanism (through the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Fifth Committee) for review of mandates in accordance with the provisions of the programme planning rules and regulations. The Group is of the view that if it is a question that the existing procedure is not functioning effectively, then the approach should be to strengthen the mechanism so that it can do so.

Concerning paragraph 93 the Group recalls that an extensive review and reform of the budgetary process was undertaken by the Secretary-General in 2003 and that the Secretary-General is expected to report on its implementation at the 62 nd session.

Similarly, with respect to the review of the human resources rules we await the Secretary-General's report to be submitted to the General Assembly at its 61 st session. It is not clear to the Group how this proposed review will affect the ongoing implementation of current mandates.

There are some concerns with paragraph 94 regarding a one-time staff buy-out. Such a proposal would need to include information relating to the criteria and modus operandi for undertaking this exercise, the scope of the buy-

out, number of posts, as well as available resources. An indication of the implication for staff mobility and permanent contracts would also be relevant.

Concerning paragraph 95, the Group notes that a number of management reform initiatives are being put in place by the Secretary-General and while we support the general thrust of these initiatives, we agree that Member States should have a role in monitoring their implementation. We also await the Secretary-General's report on the review of the Office of Internal Oversight Services aimed at strengthening its independence, authority, expertise and capacity.

The Group fully supports the views expressed in paragraphs 96 and 97 regarding gender balance and eliminating sexual exploitation and abuse in all UN activities.

The Group shares in the recognition of the selfless commitment of the United Nations staff and strongly condemns all violent attacks against their safety and security.

I thank you.

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