



STATEMENT BY MR. ABDELLAH BENMELLOUK, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, ON AGENDA ITEM 7 (d): INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION IN THE FIELD OF INFORMATICS, DURING THE GENERAL SEGMENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (GENEVA, 17 JULY 2003)

Mr. President,

Allow me on behalf of the Group of 77 and China to commend you on the able manner in which you have continued to steer our work in the General Segment.

Let me also thank the Secretary-General for his detailed report on the agenda under discussion today. My deepest gratitude goes to H.E. Amb. Bob Jalang'o, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations in New York for his selfless and dedicated service as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics.

I wish also to thank H.E. Amb. Gert Ronsental, President of ECOSOC and Permanent Representative of Guatemala for his continued support and encouragement to the Working Group.

Mr. President,

The technology boom of the late 1990s has continued to bring challenges as well as opportunities to the world. The developing countries in general have continued to be marginalized due to their inability to take advantage of the dot.com era. The digital divide has continued to grow wider due to the rapidly changing technology, the high cost involved and the lack of the requisite human resource capacity. This trend must not be allowed to continue if we are ever to realize the objective contained in the Millennium declaration of ensuring that the benefits of new information and communication technologies are available to all.

Mr. President,

I wish to commend the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics in collaboration with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and other partners in the private sector for the progress achieved so far in fulfilling its mandate and in particular facilitating training for delegations and organizing fora for the dissemination of information on e-commerce, e-government and cyber security initiatives.

We also commend the Secretariat through the Information Technology Services Division (ITSD) the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) and the Department of Public Information (DPI) for its co-operation and dedication in implementing the decisions of the Working Group.

Mr. President,

The Group of 77 and China notes with appreciation the recommendations of the sub-committee appointed by the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group. In particular my Group welcomes the recommendation that the Ad Hoc open-ended Group on Informatics plays a crucial and important role as the only forum for Missions to discuss their information technology requirements and that its mandate should be strengthened.

Mr. President,

In view of the foregoing, the Group of 77 and China is convinced that the necessity of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics is still valid today. Therefore we are once again requesting the President of ECOSOC to convene the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics for one more year to enable it to carry out its mandate as stated in ECOSOC resolution 1995/61 of 28th July 1995. I am therefore appealing to Members of the Council to fully support the draft resolution by our Group on this issue and contained in document E/2003/L.11.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to appeal to governments and partners to provide the necessary resources to ensure full implementation of the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group.

Thank you, Mr. President.