



STATEMENT BY MR. ABDELLAH BENMELLOUK, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, ON AGENDA ITEM 13 (b), SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT, DURING THE SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL GENERAL SEGMENT, (GENEVA, 21 JULY 2003)

Mr. President,

I would like to start by referring to paragraph 51 of the General Assembly Resolution A57/270 B under the title of “Integrated and Coordinated Implementation of and Follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations Conferences and Summits in the Economic and Social Fields”, which recognized the role of the Commission on Science and technology for Development, in the area of science and technology for development, as a forum for improving the understanding of science and technology issues and for the formulation of recommendations and guidelines on science and technology matters within both the United Nations system and the framework of integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits.

Mr. President,

Technology is advancing at a very rapid pace, thus providing an immense potential for development through leapfrogging stages of technological development. However, the fact that such an immense potential is not being adequately harnessed threatens to further marginalize the economies and peoples of the majority of the developing countries. The urgent necessity for the transfer of technology and innovative ways to put this potential at the service of development for all should form the work of the United Nations in the area of science and technology for development.

In furthering this objective we would like to repeat our belief that the CSTD should formulate proposals to ensure that the TRIPS agreement serves to promote the development of developing countries including a code of conduct for all countries which facilitate the access to dissemination and transfer of technologies on concessional and preferential terms from developed to developing countries. This sentiment has now been reinforced in the outcomes of the Doha Ministerial Declaration and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation

Mr. President,

The importance of technology for the transformation, development and competitiveness of countries is well recognized. However, many hurdles still remain, especially in developing countries. Many developing countries are trying to improve their technological systems and seeking international support for these efforts. The CSTD, as the “think tank” of ECOSOC should be supported by all member States if it is to play a more active and visible role in promoting technology for development and in helping developing countries integrate technology into their national development policies as part of the Millennium Development Goals.

This is crucial in strengthening the ability of the Commission to predict, monitor and report socioeconomic benefits and risks inherent in technology at a global level by drawing on information and integrating data from national, regional and international bodies.

New and emerging technologies play a vital role in raising the productive capacity and competitiveness of nations. They offer good opportunities for developing countries to “leapfrog”

stages of development and to narrow the development gap with the industrialized countries. However, there is considerable concentration of technology and technological know-how in a few countries and transnational corporations. Therefore, without a greater policy focus on the transfer and absorption of technology and its link to foreign direct investment and international trade, and without a more determined strategic approach by Governments, the private sector, and regional and international organizations, advances in technology may exacerbate the development gaps between developed and developing countries.

The role of the Commission to coordinate science and technology is vital especially now that the turnover of pervasive technologies, with wide application in agriculture, health, education, and industry among others, has increased and the policies governing the innovations are rapidly becoming complex. While the Commission is doing a fine job in addressing emerging issues related to science and technology, such biotechnology and information and communication technologies, there is a need to strengthen its role as a consensus-building intergovernmental expert body to contribute to global development goals. It is thus timely that all member states support the CSTD and its Secretariat.

In conclusion, let me reiterate our readiness to work collectively with all our partners for consensus action on issues related to science and technology, in order to meet the developing countries needs in this field.

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