



STATEMENT BY H.E. DR NKOSAZANA DLAMINI ZUMA, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, AT THE HANDING-OVER CEREMONY OF THE GROUP OF 77 (United Nations, New York, 12 January 2006)

His Excellency Jan Eliasson, President of the General Assembly;
His Excellency the Hon. KD Knight, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica;
His Excellency Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations;
Mr. Kermal Dervis, Administrator of UNDP;
Dr. Jose Antonio Ocampo, Under-Secretary-General, DESA;
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor to accept the Chair of the G77 and China for 2006 on behalf of the Government of the Republic of South Africa. I would like to take this opportunity to pay a special tribute to Minister KD Knight, Foreign Minister of Jamaica, and Ambassador Stafford Neil and their team, for Jamaica's outstanding stewardship of the G77 and China in 2005. I would also like to commend Jamaica's tireless efforts in promoting the development agenda under difficult negotiating circumstances that led to the Outcome Document of the High Level Summit held in September 2005.

South Africa accepts the responsibility to Chair the Group of 77 and China on behalf of the Africa Group that nominated us for this esteemed position. We are humbled by the honor extended for us to represent the development needs and aspirations of the entire developing world.

We can assure you that we will spare no effort in ensuring that we collectively enhance the development agenda of the South.

South Africa's foreign policy is committed to the realization of a just and equitable global economic order. We believe that in order to achieve a better life for all, we must pursue development from a global perspective. We are committed to the development of Africa, and of the entire developing world.

At the same time, we are fully aware that the expectation of a just and non-discriminatory international economic and social order has yet to be realized. The impact of globalization has been uneven and has left us with a world beset by acute economic and social inequalities. It is a world where international economic relations continue to be marked by uncertainty, imbalances and recessions that result in the continued marginalization of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries.

The 2005 World Summit clearly demonstrated that the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals including the Millennium Development Goals would not be achieved in Sub-Saharan Africa, unless there is a dramatic increase in resource flows as a matter of urgency.

South Africa looks forward to working with the G77 and China to reaffirm the principles of our Movement and to strengthen our unity, cohesion and vision of a fair and equitable multilateral system. South-South co-operation is the most potent instrument in maintaining and strengthening solidarity and multilateralism among the countries of the South and is a framework for our partnership with the North.

We are committed to work with our development partners to advance the development agenda and the eradication of poverty. It is our belief that the eradication of poverty in the world is not only an issue of importance for developing countries but also a matter of our collective global interest. Recently, we have witnessed how underdevelopment has fueled the tragic problems of migration between Africa and Europe.

The United Nations has a fundamental role to play in promoting the achievement of sustainable development for all. In the past few years the ability of the United Nations in galvanizing support and political will for development has been evident as the UN managed to set the global agenda for development through the MDGs and other international agreed development goals.

We will continue to reiterate the importance of maintaining a balanced approach in addressing security and development. The success for development depends not only on political will, but also in making certain that there are adequate, reliable and predictable resources for addressing the permanent threat to peace and security posed

by underdevelopment.

This means that the G77 needs to continue strengthening the ability of the UN to build international consensus and at the same time encourage our development partners to support the various aspects of the development agenda.

As part of our strategic approach to the follow-up to the 2005 World Summit, we need to ensure that the follow-up on development is fully comprehensive. Some of the areas in which we need to focus include ensuring coherence in international development cooperation, addressing the systemic issues, technology transfer, debt reduction, financing for development, and building on the outcome of the WTO Hong Kong Ministerial outcome.

In recent years, the world has seen a growing incidence of natural disasters as well as other instances of serious environmental degradation. This shows the need for our Movement to continue to give priority to the achievement of sustainable development.

We will spare no effort in championing the needs of the Group of 77 and China in the follow-up and the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

The eradication of poverty in the world requires a full commitment of the international community to address the needs of all countries with special needs, many who belong to our Group.

In 2006, we will have an opportunity to undertake a five-year review of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries. This review should be an occasion for the international community to enhance concrete support for the LDCs. It is a tragedy that after so many years very few LDCs have managed to graduate from this category.

It is also important that support be provided for the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action for the Landlocked Developing Countries.

We also need to build on the experience of the past few years in which ECOSOC has served as a forum for interaction between the UN system and international financial institutions, civil society and the private sector. The 2005 World Summit reaffirmed the importance of an effective ECOSOC as a principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development.

A strengthened ECOSOC can become a pillar for development within the UN system, just as the Security Council remains for the security agenda. A stronger ECOSOC can only benefit the G77 and China in promoting our policies within the system.

The G77 and China cannot be indifferent to the rest of the reform agenda of the United Nations. The coming months are going to be critical for UN reform that must be comprehensive to include Security Council reform, the establishment of the Human Rights Council, and management reform.

At the same time, we have noted the recent decision taken by the General Assembly on the UN budget. We would hope that the reform effort does not threaten the United Nations with a financial crisis that can only further weaken our beloved Organization. We therefore hope that the General Assembly will be ready to lift the spending cap on the budget when the Secretary-General indicates later that he requires the remaining funds to continue his stewardship of this Organization.

In conclusion, allow me to also pay tribute to the other countries that have held the honor of leading our great Movement in recent years. We hope that our collective efforts will take this movement to even greater heights.

I thank you.