



STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR. AHMAD BIN ABDULLAH AL MAHMOUD, MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE STATE OF QATAR, ON THE OCCASION OF HANDOVER OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE GROUP OF 77 FROM THE STATE OF QATAR TO JAMAICA (New York, 25 January 2005)

**Your Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General,
Your Excellency Mr. Jean Ping, President of the General Assembly,
Your Excellency Mr. Zephirin Diabre, Associate Administrator of UNDP,
Excellencies, Permanent Representatives to the UN,
Distinguished Delegates,**

May God's Peace, Mercy and Blessings be upon you,

At the outset, I would like to express our solidarity with the friendly states of South Asia and the Indian Ocean that were devastated by the recent tsunami, which constituted a new additional challenge to development, as it reeked unprecedented havoc in the region, claiming the lives of more than 200,000 people and causing incalculable losses to property. We would like to extend to the citizens of those states our sincere, heart felt condolences, while assuring them of our continued support and solidarity.

Distinguished Delegates,

On the occasion of the conclusion of Qatar's chairmanship of the G77 and China, it gives me great pleasure to express, on behalf of my country, sincere thanks and appreciation to you and to all those who have helped us discharge our mission during our tenure. I would like to extend thanks and appreciation to Your Excellency Mr. Jean Ping, President of the General Assembly, for accepting our invitation, as the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, to participate in this celebration, which reflects your interest in and support for the work of our group. I would like also to extend our thanks, in particular, to Your Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations, for your support for the legitimate demands of our group in social and economic development, and for your stewardship of the organization at a time characterized by the challenges to multilateralism and international peace and security, and a less than robust growth in the world economy.

I am also pleased to extend thanks to his Excellency Mr. Zephirin Diabre, Associate Administrator of UNDP, for his support for the group in dealing with its major concerns. I would also like to acknowledge the support that our group receives from UNCTAD and DESA, which have helped us meet the challenges associated with the chairmanship of the group.

Distinguished Delegates,

At the inception of Qatar's chairmanship, we stressed the importance of solidarity in conducting the work of the Group of 77 and China, because we were fully cognizant of the fact that the solidarity of the group, which constituted the sole universal intergovernmental voice of the South, depended on sincere respect for openness, participation and consensus in the pursuit of the interests of the group. In this regard, I would like to report that the State of Qatar, under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, has earnestly endeavored to fulfill its commitments to further promote and consolidate the Group's efforts towards achieving its objectives. This was vitally important in organizing our work to deal with the challenging negotiations, especially during the regular session of the General Assembly.

As promised in our inaugural ceremony, the State of Qatar sought to set up core and/or ad hoc open-ended working groups, which enabled the group to effectively negotiate a collective position and achieve positive results. Our collective approach has resulted in achieving consensus with respect to negotiating and adopting resolution 58/291, on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit, and the coordinated and integrated implementation and follow up of the outcomes of the major United Nations Conferences and Summits in the economic and social fields.

Our collective achievement in ensuring consensus in the various negotiations on macroeconomic policy questions, sustainable development, countries with special situations, including the important Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of the Operational Activities of the United Nations System (TCPR), is ample testimony to the prudence of this strategic approach. We are particularly satisfied that adequate emphasis was placed on the need to increase resources that all donor countries and countries in condition to do so should make available to support the regional

level activities of the United Nations system, especially in the least developed countries.

During our chairmanship of the Group for the year 2004, the Group of 77 and China has been a strong advocate and an effective negotiator on behalf of its members. A draft resolution which dealt comprehensively with the question of globalization and took in to consideration the concerns of the developing countries was adopted. Also, a successful meeting was held in June 2004 in Sao Paulo, Brazil to commemorate the Fortieth Anniversary of the Group. The meeting adopted an important declaration that set the tone for negotiations in the United Nations for the Group during 2004 and the years to come. The Group also participated actively in the UNCTAD XI Ministerial Meeting.

Realizing the potential of the trade to become a major source of financing the MDG's and other internationally agreed upon development goals, the Group emphasized, during all negotiations, the need for a multilateral trading system that is truly open, equitable, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory, and development-oriented.

Also, in the past year, and as a follow-up to the Doha Round, an understanding was reached in Geneva with respect to international subsidies, cotton, and trade facilitations, which is a step in the right direction. The Group continued to emphasize the need to develop the capacity of developing countries to enable them to effectively participate in trade negotiations and to safeguard their interests. Moreover, the group continues to articulate the need for measures to be taken to facilitate the accession of those countries that have applied for WTO membership, in order to make the whole trading system a pro-development regime.

During the ECOSOC Substantive Session, last year, the Group negotiated a number of important resolutions and also the Ministerial Declaration on LDC's, which highlighted the special needs of these countries and urged the partners in development to honor their commitments towards LDC'S as included in the outcomes of different UN conferences and summits.

We feel satisfied with the outcome of the International Conference to Review the Implementation of the Program of Action for the Sustainable Development of SIDS, which was held in Mauritius from 10-14 January, 2005. These countries are extremely vulnerable to external shocks and need special measures to enable them to achieve the MDG's.

During the past year, Qatar hosted the Doha International Conference for the Family. The outcome of the conference was noted by the General Assembly in its resolution 59/111 of 6 December 2004.

As Qatar prepares to hand over the mantle of chairmanship, the challenges that the world faces remain as pressing as ever. They are the challenges of building a new development consensus for the next decades that delicately balances old and new security concerns and the quest to eradicate poverty and attain sustainable development in all our countries, while emphasizing that peace and security can not be sustainable unless they are based on a foundation of development and justice.

We believe that the many dialogues that we have engaged in, last year, have successfully launched the search for a global consensus on these issues. The report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and the report on the Millennium Projects are already before the United Nations. In the coming months, while preparing for the 2005 high-level event, we should participate actively in enriching these two historic contributions and should leave our imprint on them. We should prepare our perspective on these issues and insist that they are part of the main contributions to the event.

In doing this we should not forget that the record of the international community to multilateral approaches is checkered, and sometimes selective and not fully reflective of the interest of developing countries. This explains the endemic uproar against globalization that threatens to obfuscate its benefits. We believe the interdependence of and cooperation on matters of peace and security, and development has become a fact of global coexistence. Ensuring a common perception of global challenges requires rededication to multilateralism and shunning the temptations towards shortsighted unilateralism.

Distinguished Delegates,

The importance of South-South Corporation in promoting the development of developing countries can not be over-emphasized. Acknowledging the importance of this corporation since the beginning, Qatar hosted the High Level Forum on Trade and Investment for the countries of the South in Doha in December 2004. It will have the honor of hosting the Second South Summit to be convened in Doha in June 2005. In the next few months, we will, in close cooperation with you and with the chairmanship, seek the optimum means to exploit this event to promote the cause of the developing countries in their quest to hold important multilateral negotiations on the future of the world

economy and collective security.

With the conclusion of our tenure, we hope that we have succeeded in leading the group and have made a positive contribution to promoting its progress. We would like to affirm our readiness to continue working with the group to forge ahead towards the achievement of our common goals and interests. In this regard, I would like to extend thanks to you and to all those who contributed to facilitating the task of His Excellency Ambassador Nassir AbdulAziz Al-Nasser, the permanent representative and the other members of the permanent mission of the State of Qatar during the Qatari chairmanship of the G77 and China for 2004. I would also like to extend thanks to the secretariat of the group, headed by Mr. Murad Ahmia, the Executive Secretary, for their cooperation and efforts during our chairmanship of the group.

In conclusion, it gives me great pleasure to seize this opportunity to congratulate Jamaica on its unanimous election to the chairmanship of the group and its assumption of the chairmanship for 2005, assuring it of our total support. We are fully confident that Jamaica will defend the interests of the group and will lead it skillfully and judiciously during this year, and wish it every success in leading our group during the year 2005.

Thank you, and may God's peace and mercy be upon you.