



STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE K.D. KNIGHT, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE OF JAMAICA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL FOLLOW-UP AND COORDINATION COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (Havana, Cuba, 21 March 2005)

H.E. Marta Lomas, Minister for Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation
H.E. Felipe Pérez Roque, Minister for Foreign Affairs
H.E. Munir Akram, President of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
Excellencies,
Other Specially Invited Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to be here with you in Havana on the occasion of the 11th meeting of the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee (IFCC-XI). We have returned to Cuba five years after the historic South Summit at which we adopted the Havana Programme of Action and identified elements for more intensified South-South cooperation. Havana was also the venue for IFCC-VI in 1987, so this is only a continuation of the strong Cuban tradition of supporting issues of concern to the South and in providing a platform for us to consolidate our efforts towards realizing the full potential of South-South cooperation. We are indebted to the Government and the people of Cuba for their unswerving commitment and spirit of solidarity.

Responding to both current and emerging challenges requires creative and innovative thinking. As the broadest mechanism for consultation and policy coordination among developing countries, the G-77 and China must take the lead in guiding this process. South-South cooperation provides the greatest unexplored potential for economic growth and sustainable development. The emerging international economic order, characterized by systemic inequities in global economic governance, external debt problems, insufficient levels of ODA and declining terms of trade, make it imperative that developing countries explore new and dynamic means of responding to these growing disparities. South-South cooperation remains the most practical means of advancing this objective.

While not a substitute for North-South dialogue and international cooperation in favour of development, South-South cooperation provides an important platform for developing countries to undertake joint programmes and projects responsive to their needs and concerns. It embodies the determination and commitment of the South to overcome the attendant social and economic instability associated with the current global environment, through greater collaboration and coordination at the national and regional levels.

Our collective endeavour must be directed towards building on the existing framework of cooperation while pursuing new initiatives, in keeping with the realities of the 21st Century. We must be bold in the proposals we advance over the next few days in order to further strengthen South-South cooperation. I therefore trust that we will be able to reach agreement on possible new areas for sectoral cooperation beyond those in which we are currently engaged, while remaining true to the principles and objectives enshrined in the Havana Programme of Action.

In concluding, I wish to draw attention to the fact that our work in Havana is but a small portion of the mammoth tasks for the G-77 and China in 2005. Our work here will provide the framework for the Second South Summit to be held in Doha in June as well as the major discussions at the global level, particularly in the context of the High Level Event to be held in New York to review the implementation of the outcomes of major UN conferences and summits. We must seize these opportunities to positively influence the international agenda in favour of achieving development objectives and in addressing our concerns. I trust that together we will be able to succeed in this endeavour to create an enabling environment for this and future generations.

Thank you.