



STATEMENT BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, DR NKOSAZANA DLAMINI ZUMA, CHAIR OF THE GROUP OF 77 CHINA, TO THE HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING ON THE MID-TERM COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE DECADE 2001-2010 (New York, 18 September 2006)

Madame President,

Allow me to congratulate you on your election as the 61st President of the General Assembly. We are delighted to see you presiding over this important High Level Meeting.

The Group of 77 and China welcomes the High-Level Plenary Meeting to assess the progress of the first five years of implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010.

The Group of 77 and China further welcomes the Cotonou Strategy as it is a comprehensive analytical midterm review of the status of the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the first five years which clearly and succinctly outlines the achievements thus far, the challenges ahead and the actions to be undertaken by the Least Developed Countries and development partners.

As a result of this midterm review the Group of 77 and China notes with concern that insufficient progress has been achieved in the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action, and as indicated very few Least Developed Countries are expected to be able to meet the Brussels Programme of Action's objectives, goals and targets if current trends continue. It is therefore, essential that full implementation of the seven commitments must be adhered to if the Least Developed Countries are to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

In spite of appropriate measures taken and tremendous efforts made by the Least Developed Countries themselves to build enabling national environments for the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action in their efforts to pursue much-needed development, the support received from development partners is still insufficient, or sometimes, even completely lacking.

The Group of 77 and China calls on the development partners of the Least Developed Countries to expeditiously fulfil their commitments as outlined in the Brussels programme of Action so that the objectives, goals and targets are achieved in a timely and expeditious manner.

Madame President

The 2005 World Summit Outcome reaffirmed the commitments made to address the special needs of the Least Developed Countries and urged all countries and all relevant organizations of the United Nations system and other relevant international organizations, including the Bretton Woods Institutions to make concerted efforts and adopt speedy measures for meeting in a timely manner the goals and targets of the Brussels Programme of Action.

Achieving the goals and targets as contained in the Programme of Action calls for continued and a renewed commitment from both the Least Developed Countries and development partners. It is vital that this partnership be re-invigorated and enhanced by promoting mutual and shared responsibilities between Least Developed Countries and development partners, in the interests of promoting economic growth and sustainable development in Least Developed Countries thereby further promoting their integration into the global economy.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm and agree with the midterm review that special attention should be given to gender equality, the empowerment of women in gender equality will improve both maternal and infant mortality which are important MDG's, agriculture infrastructure and HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria. The obstacles to exports from least developed countries should be removed.

Co-ordinated action from the UN and its agencies, funds and programmes should be enhanced to support least developed countries. We should all encourage the private sector to invest in the LDC's, but more importantly the development partners must fulfil their commitments made at all the major conferences and summits in the past ten years especially the Monterrey Financing for Development Conference and the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development

I thank you.

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