



**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. MOHAMED BENNOUNA AMBASSADOR,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MOROCCO TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN
NEW YORK, CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, BEFORE THE LATIN-
AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE
HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE ON SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION (Caracas, 16
June 2003)**

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like at the outset, to express my deep appreciation to the Government of Venezuela for inviting me to the Latin-American and Caribbean regional preparatory meeting for the High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation to be held in Marrakech from 16 to 19 December 2003. This is an honor for me and a privilege to take part in this important meeting.

In this respect, I would like to congratulate the Government of Venezuela and the Economic System of Latin-America and Caribbean (SELA) for organizing this important event. I am convinced that this important meeting will contribute positively to the preparation of the Marrakech Conference on South-South cooperation.

I would like also to congratulate my good friend Ambassador Milos Alcalay, who spares no efforts to support the G77 endeavors and provide me with his invaluable advice as he chaired our Group during last year with dedication and very marked leadership.

Your meeting constitutes a very constructive step towards the concretization of the objectives of the Marrakech Conference and will help integrating the regional dimension into the preparatory process and into the outcome of the Conference.

The Latin-American region, its countries and its intra-regional groupings and institutions have always played a pivotal role and undertaking multiplied efforts towards enhancing South-South cooperation in the various economic, technical and social fields.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China attaches a fundamental importance to promoting economic, social and technical cooperation among developing countries. Such cooperation is necessary to reduce the vulnerability of developing countries to external factors and to maximize complementarities to accelerate their development and growth. South-South cooperation could play a critical role in overcoming social and economic development constraints in the South as well as in strengthening its position vis-à-vis dialogue with the North.

It was in this very beautiful country, Venezuela, that the Group of 77 adopted in 1981 the Caracas Programme of Action that constituted a major step in strengthening efforts to translate Economic cooperation among developing countries into practical cooperation actions and towards the attainment of their collective self-reliance.

Mr. Chairman,

The recent developments in the global economy, markedly influenced by an accelerated globalization and the current trends towards increasing trade liberalization, have made the

international economic environment much more complicated than it was in the previous decades. Beside the new opportunities arising from the globalization of the world and trade liberalization, there are tangible risks of marginalization that continue to threaten the vulnerable among developing countries.

In these new circumstances facing developing countries, the need for South-South cooperation cannot be over-emphasized. No single country, even the most advanced among developing countries, can individually achieve sustained development and growth and influence the outcomes of the international agenda. But collectively there is a reasonable chance of being much more effective in building development and contributing in shaping the new international relations.

Mr. Chairman,

Recently in Havana, in April 2000, our Heads of States and Governments emphasized the role of South-South cooperation as an effective instrument for optimizing the potential of developing countries to promote development through mobilizing and sharing resources and expertise in developing countries. They have also stressed the imperative role of such cooperation in the context of globalization and as a necessary element, complementing North-South cooperation. The Havana Summit stressed, therefore, the necessity to pursue cooperation among developing countries with determination and political will.

In this context, the South Summit decided to convene a High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation that my country has the honor to host in Marrakech from 16 to 19 December 2003.

The High-level Conference has to place the focus on the implementation of the identified priorities and extract from existing plans and programmes a number of concrete elements for implementation. The focus of the Marrakech Conference has to be placed on areas in which immediate action can be taken.

The High level Conference presents also a good opportunity to take stock of the Havana Summit outcome in the field of South-South cooperation. It should undertake a Mid-Term Review to assess the implementation of the decisions contained in the Havana Programme of Action and highlight actions to be taken before the next South Summit to be held in 2005.

In a Note that I have discussed, during the last three months, with my colleagues the Ambassadors of the member countries of the Group of 77 and China in New York, we have identified some areas for action to be addressed during the High-level Conference of Marrakech and on which the focus could be placed.

In this regard, intra-regional cooperation, including regional and sub-regional groupings as well as the importance of bridging them were identified as pivotal dynamics for enhancing South-South cooperation. Trade and Investment, food and agriculture, health and education, information and communication technology have been identified as areas of possible actions for the High-level Conference.

There is a considerable potential of sharing resources, expertise and experiences among developing countries in these crucial fields. There are also many possibilities to explore within South-South cooperation towards overcoming intrinsic and institutional barriers to trade, finance, knowledge, information and technology.

The focus is also to be placed on triangular cooperation arrangements as an innovative mode of

cooperation which could play an increasing catalytically role in South-South cooperation by bringing together developing countries and donors in specific cooperation programmes, using available expertise of other developing countries and developed countries financial assistance. This new approach would promote a better association with our partners in developed countries through concrete, attractive and result-based programmes.

In this respect, we are intending to invite to the Marrakech Conference donor countries and agencies, international organizations, NGOs and the private sector to involve them in our work and to discuss with them our concerns in a larger sitting of the Group of 77.

We are looking forward to achieving in the G77 Ministerial Conference in Marrakech a set of concrete initiatives and measures which should be action-oriented and encompasses implementable actions in the field of South-South cooperation. The Marrakech Conference should not lead to the adoption of new programmes or plans of action but should be seen as an opportunity for developing countries to advance towards operationalizing the decisions already taken during the past conferences and Summits.

To this end, the Group of 77 and China relies on your invaluable contribution and inputs. The Marrakech Conference accounts on the pivotal role that the countries and regional and sub-regional groupings and institutions, in the region of Latin -America and Caribbean, are playing in regional and interregional cooperation.

I thank you.

