

**Message from the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran**  
**H.E. Mr. Seyed Mohammad Khatami**  
**To the Opening Session of the Tenth Meeting of the Intergovernmental**  
**Follow-up and Coordination Committee on**  
**Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (IFCC-X)**  
**Tehran, 19 August 2001**

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Mr. Chairman,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome you all dear guests to this meeting and extend to you my most sincere and heartfelt greetings. We take pride in hosting the tenth meeting of the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee while carrying the presidency of the Group of 77, and consider the coincidence with the United Nations Year for Dialogue Among Civilizations a blessing. Inspired by the spirit of the “Dialogue”, our fundamental message to the fellow developing countries at the beginning of the new Millennium has been, and remains, the imperative of collective enterprise for a better common future, a more humane world order, and in fact, a tomorrow free from fear and want for all.

The Group’s decision to endorse Iran’s offer for hosting this important gathering is, in fact, a further confirmation of the trust and confidence of the entire developing community in the Islamic Republic of Iran, of which we are proud and grateful. The developing world in its entirety is fully cognizant of the long tradition of Iranian active engagement in the activities of the Group of 77. The Islamic Republic of Iran has pursued from the very inception a very active policy of economic and technical cooperation with other developing countries, particularly in Africa, and has practically proven its full and unreserved commitment to the principles and objectives of the Group of 77, as well as to the realization of its cherished ideals and objectives. The preservation of the Group’s unity and solidarity and its further consolidation and strengthening are among our highest priorities and, as the members of the Group are fully cognizant, we have endeavoured in earnest to this end since the very beginning of our one-year tenure. I would like to assure you that this overriding objective will continue to guide our work for the Group, including in this meeting.

The tenth meeting of the Follow-up and Coordination Committee (IFCC-X), convened after a hiatus of five years, and as the first following the very successful South Summit that was held in Havana in April 2000, is indeed a very important occasion for the assessment of what had been undertaken prior to the Summit. Moreover, the meeting would provide the Group of 77 and China with a propitious opportunity to look into the state of economic cooperation among ourselves, and take a realistic stock of what has been achieved. Our major task here is to further reflect on the spirit and ideals of the Havana Declaration and to devise appropriate actions and measures for the implementation of the Havana Programme of Action. These two negotiated documents of the South Summit represent the very concrete manifestation of the political will and wisdom of the South at the highest level and embody the long-term vision and the strategic perspective of the developing community in a rapidly changing world.

Economic cooperation among developing countries, and in a more general sense, South-South cooperation, have always been dear to us. Such a cooperation is becoming all the more inevitable in this tumultuous world – a world with huge potentials, an uncertain world and yet fraught with daunting challenges. Under such circumstances, the biggest preoccupation of the developing countries is how to plan and strive to change the

current bitter situation – a situation of pervasive, endemic and increasing poverty and still worse, ever-increasing marginalization in the world arena.

Twenty years after the Caracas meeting where the historic decision to establish the Committee was made, and with critical hindsight, it is my considered view that we in the South do indeed enjoy the capacity and capability, as well as the collective experience, to face the challenges in front of us and address them. It is truly a matter of utmost satisfaction that the Group of 77, as the sole universal negotiating body of the developing world in the multilateral arena, has proved itself as a potent negotiating partner. The valuable experience in the recent climate change meeting in Bonn should serve as a guiding principle to all of us that it is possible, and practicable, for the Group to act as a credible negotiating force and yet remain faithful to its own principles and achieve its stated objectives. There is only one way to go, to go forward. Success and achievement should be made irreversible.

Looking with deep anxiety and extreme dismay at the sad and disheartening ongoing conflicts in various parts of the developing world, particularly in Africa, one cannot but seek solace in what is now conventional wisdom that development is the best contribution to peace. And genuine, long-term and comprehensive development cannot but start in our midst, by ourselves in our respective societies, and through our collective efforts – first and foremost, South-South cooperation. Emphasis here in this meeting on economic cooperation among developing countries certainly does not imply downplaying, let alone neglect, of the equally important North-South relations and cooperation, which we consider as a strategic policy tract for the developing world.

We should all endeavour to arrive at a better understanding of the cherished ideal of collective self-reliance and South-South cooperation, and undertake, individually and collectively, to move beyond words, decisions, and documents – good and necessary as they are – and make our previous decisions a reality, and a beginning for further future work. We can, through joint efforts, make the Tehran meeting a success and take a step forward the state of economic cooperation among ourselves. What the developing world expects from the deliberations of this gathering in the days ahead is the formulation of an overall roadmap for the actual operationalization of the provisions of the Havana Programme of Action. Realism, objectivity, future-looking determination, creativity, and undoubtedly a certain degree of boldness, are among the key components that should direct the work of this meeting. Let us try to put South-South cooperation on a new course. The message from Tehran should be a message of resolve, creativity and hope. And I remain confident that the Ministerial Roundtable would make a good contribution to the meeting's deliberations.

With these introductory words, I declare open the tenth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee of the Group of 77 and wish all of you every success.

May God's Mercy and Blessing be with You.