



STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. MOHAMED BENNOUNA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, AT THE PLENARY MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ON ITEM 39 A): NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA: PROGRESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION AND INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT (New York, 15 October 2003)

Mr. President,

In relation to the Item 39 a) entitled “New Partnership for the development of Africa: progress in the implementation and international support”, allow me, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, to make the following remarks:

We would like to thank the Secretary-General for his exhaustive report on the progress made in the implementation of NEPAD and the support brought by the international community to this development program.

The Group of 77 and China is pleased to see this debate covering all the issues relating to the development of Africa. This approach is consistent with spirit of NEPAD, a comprehensive program for economic and political development of the African continent and a framework for co-operation and partnership with Africa’s friends.

Allow me, Mr. President, express the total and unconditional support of the Group of 77 and China to NEPAD, to its implementation and the achievement of its objectives.

The NEPAD constitutes a basic integrated platform for the development of the African continent. Its implementation depends primarily on the political will of each African country to reflect it in its policies and national development strategies. Its success also depends on the ability of each Government to mobilize all the national capacities and all the stakeholders for the realization of NEPAD objectives.

The report of the Secretary-General stresses the follow-up measures and decisions taken at the national level as well as the institutional mechanisms set up at the regional level.

The establishment of the African Peer Review Mechanism, for monitoring and assessment, constitutes a significant step made by the African countries for assessing their political and economic performances and reflects their determination to ensure their own development. This mechanism will enable them to monitor the process of implementation and the achievement of the objectives of NEPAD. Four countries will start this mechanism by the end of this year.

Moreover, Africa has intensified its efforts to consolidate democracy and strengthen regional mechanism for conflict prevention, resolution and management. Similar efforts were made for the establishment of Panafrican Parliament and National Focal Points for NEPAD as well as initiatives, at the sub-regional level in various fields: infrastructures, agriculture, health, education etc.

We share the Secretary-General’s view that the main challenge encountered so far by the African countries with regard to implementation lies in the lack of resources.

Indeed, the mobilization of national resources is not sufficient to ensure an adequate financing of economic and social development programs.

International support remains essential for the success of NEPAD. In this respect, the General Assembly adopted, in 2002, a Declaration, which calls on the international community and the United Nations System to support the implementation of NEPAD.

The developed countries should help Africa by respecting and implementing their commitments undertaken in various United Nations Conferences and Summits, in particular by taking measures to achieve the objectives set up by the United Nations with regard to Official Development Assistance, to resolve the foreign debt crisis, to open their markets to these countries' exports, to promote and facilitate investment in Africa and to support the African countries in their efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

As the report of the Secretary-general underlines, there has been a slight increase in the level of ODA intended for Africa, rising from 16 Billions in 2000 to 18 Billions in 2002. We are satisfied with the fact that this increase was accompanied by measures taken by certain donor countries aiming at lifting conditionality on ODA, thus giving more flexibility to the recipient countries.

The Group of 77 and China welcomes this positive trend and encourages donor countries to continue their efforts to achieve the goals agreed upon with regard to ODA.

In relation to debt relief, in spite of the measures taken with regard to the Highly Indebted Poor Countries, we are still far from resolving the problems encountered by these countries to take benefit of this initiative. These problems range from tardiness in the payment of the contributions announced to the HIPC fiduciary funds, to the impact of international economic environment and of the economic and financial policies of the developed countries on the macroeconomic reform undertaken by these countries. Indeed, such difficulties delayed many countries in moving from the "decision point" to the "completion point".

As the report of the Secretary-general underlines, certain countries, which reached the completion point, observed a degradation of their debt indicators because of the decrease in export incomes and the volatility of commodities prices.

In addition, it should be stressed that other heavily indebted poor countries in Africa were neglected and continue to suffer from the burden of debt and are obliged to allocate important resources to debt service to the detriment of investments in education, health and infrastructures.

The international Community, in particular developed countries, has to redouble efforts to overcome these difficulties and to allow the African countries invest their financial resources in sectors generating employment.

The increase of ODA and debt relief cannot allow the African countries to ensure a sustainable development and achieve the NEPAD objectives and those of the Millennium Declaration, if the developed countries maintain their protectionist practices. The loss in export income of the African countries due to the agricultural subsidies and the non tariff obstacles, in addition to the volatility of the prices of the basic commodities, continue to have devastating impact on the efforts undertaken and plans for the development of the African countries.

Mr. President,

The role of international trade remains of paramount importance for the attainment of sustainable

development. Only through reinforced, reliable, predictable and general access to markets can African countries have increased resources for development.

Unfortunately, little progress has been achieved and the developed countries seem to be far from meeting the commitments they made at the different United Nations Conferences and Summits particularly the Monterrey Conference, the Millennium Summit and Doha Conference which decided to place the interests of developing countries at the centre of the multilateral trade negotiations. The failure of Cancun Conference and the cotton scandal have revealed the inconsistency of developed countries positions even with the essence of the multilateral trade system: on one hand, developed countries call for a reinforced and general liberalization of trade in African countries to the extent of imposing it through other multilateral institutions and on the other hand, developed countries show no sign of openness concerning the legitimate claims and urgent needs of African countries.

Mr. President,

The role of the United Nations remains more than ever crucial in generating adequate international support to NEPAD. Without international solidarity, Africa would not be able to reach the objectives of NEPAD and the wellbeing of its populations.

The creation of the Office of the Special Adviser of the Secretary General for Africa is a source of satisfaction for the G77 and China. We call all nations to supply this office with the necessary financial and human resources, to accomplish its mandate. We welcome, also, the initiatives of the different organisms of the United Nations system to support NEPAD.

Mr. President,

Different reports of the United Nations foresee that all the regions of the world would be able to reach the Millennium development goals, except Africa. The growth rates in African countries remain very low to halve poverty by 2015.

The persistence of poverty in Africa threatens the efforts of African countries that have engaged seriously to apply the principles and values of NEPAD by doubling efforts for the promotion of democracy, good governance, human rights and by reforming their macroeconomic policies and liberalizing foreign trade.

Poverty remains one of the main threats to stability and security in numerous regions, if not in the world. We must gather our efforts and provide the necessary support and solidarity to the African continent to help to put an end to its misery and despair.

Thank you, Mr. President.