



STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. MOHAMED BENNOUNA, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO TO THE UNITED NATIONS, CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, ON GENERAL DEBATE AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (NEW YORK, 6 OCTOBER 2003)

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, allow me, at the outset, to express to you our congratulations for your election to the presidency of the Second Committee. Your talent, competence and broad experience will enable you without any doubt to accomplish successfully the tasks entrusted to you. We would like to assure you of the availability and co-operation of the G77 and China. Our congratulations go as well to the other members of the Bureau.

We would also like to seize this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Ocampo for his designation at the post of Under Secretary-general for the Economic and Social Affairs. We would like to assure him of our full support and confidence and wish him every success in the accomplishment of his new mission.

Mr. Chairman,

One cannot begin this general debate without referring to the last economic forecasts of the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Indeed, the forecasts for the end of this year and the next year reveal an economic recovery in the developed countries, in particular in the United States, a recovery which would have a stimulating effect on the rest of world economy. We hope that this economic recovery will also have positive effects on the economies of the developing countries.

So far, the world economic recovery remains much weaker and slower than foreseen and this due to several factors, in particular aggravation of economic world imbalances, the slow growth in the developed economies and the persistence of the economic and social problems in the developing countries.

Also and as underlined in the report on the economic outlooks for 2003, published by the United Nations, the economic situation remains marked by a strong instability of net capital flows to developing countries.

Several among these countries became net capital exporters. The negative net transfer to these countries amounts to 155 billions dollars in 2001 and 192 billions in 2002, almost double of the average annual levels of 1998-2000.

In fact, the phenomenon of external debts remains unabated. Heavily indebted countries are forced by the circumstance of their indebtedness to provide less and less services in education, health, infrastructure and poverty eradication. The international community must come to grips with the fact that the measures taken to date to address the external debt crisis are grossly inadequate and ineffective, as the HIPC initiative has amply shown. More needs to be done to address the external debt crisis.

Mr. Chairman,

International trade remains marked by the stagnation as well as increasing protectionism against the most strategic export products of developing countries. The situation is more critical for commodity exporting countries which continue to suffer from the continued market instability and price decrease. This trend had devastating impacts on the efforts of these countries with regard to their economic and social development strategies due to the lack of sufficient, reliable and predictable financial resources.

In this regard, the World Bank report on development indicators for 2003 indicates, however that is still possible to half poverty in the world by 2015 if the rich countries reduce the obstacles to trade and increase their official development assistance.

It is undeniable that the international trade remains the principal engine for development. Countries of the South cannot achieve the MDGs without the developed countries remove the trade barriers, which prevent these countries from exploring fully their export potential and economic growth. Currently, protectionism in developed countries affects mainly exports where poor countries have a comparative advantage, in particular agricultural products, textiles and clothing as well the semi-processed products, which are labor-intensive sectors.

Moreover, prospects are not positive. There is a continued resistance in developed countries against the trade liberalization in these sectors. The failure of the 4th WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun to produce an outcome acceptable to developing countries, is a clear illustration of this resistance. The Cancun failure shows that, in spite of the promises made in particular by developed countries, we are still far from honoring the commitments undertaken in Doha to place development and the interests of developing countries in the center of the WTO negotiations. We hope that WTO Member States can strengthen their efforts during the post Cancun period towards reaching an agreement on the pending issues and, thus, give a positive signal to the world economy and hope for developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

The uncertainties, which characterize the world economy, are not reassuring, and the situation is likely to get worse for the most vulnerable economies. The recent World Bank report issued at the eve of the Cancun conference indicates that the world economic growth is substantially lower than the level required to reduce significantly the number of the poor and achieve the Millennium Development Goals in the areas of education and health. The foreseen trends for the African continent are in fact more serious. The report adds that, if the pace of the economic growth is maintained, the number of people living in extreme poverty will probably decrease in all the regions of the world, except in Africa where the foreseen growth rates will not be sufficient to stop escalation of poverty. Thus, the number of the poor will probably increase from 315 million in 1999 to 404 million in 2015.

It is to say that the uncertainties, which mark the world economy, combined with the constraints imposed by globalization, require a reconsideration of international economic co-operation, creation of a stable economic and financial environment. It also requires taking into consideration the interests of developing countries in the multilateral trade negotiations as well as the reform of the international financial institutions to adapt them to the evolving world economy while taking due consideration of developing countries needs and aspirations.

For their part, developed countries have to pursue macro-economic policies, which ensure greater

world stability with a strong political will to work towards developing and strengthening multilateralism.

In this respect, the United Nations have acted in favor of the strengthening of multilateralism and tried to find answers to the problems currently facing developing countries. The Millennium Summit, Johannesburg Summit, the international Conference for Financing for Development, in addition to the outcomes of the other United Nations conferences constitute a platform for action to achieve economic growth, sustainable development and to fight poverty. This requires determination and political will of Member States, developed and developing alike. It also requires the participation and the contribution of the international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society.

The international community has to focus now on the implementation of the framework developed in the various United Nations conferences. In this respect, the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on the integrated and coordinated follow-up to the major United Nations conferences and Summits has stressed the urgency of the implementation of the commitments undertaken by all the Member States and stakeholders. The resolution also underlined the importance of the review of the implementation as well as the responsibility of the General Assembly, ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies in the follow-up of the outcomes of the UN conferences, while looking forward to the major event in 2005, which will be devoted to a comprehensive review of all the commitments made as far as development issues are concerned.

Mr. Chairman,

The follow-up to Monterrey Consensus undoubtedly constitutes one of the principal issues on the agenda of the General Assembly this year. The High Level Dialogue On Financing for Development to be held on 29th and 30th of October 2003 represents an opportunity for the assessment of the shortcomings and progress made in the implementation of Monterrey consensus, and to reflect on ways and means to move the process forward.

The main task of our Committee consists in translating the deliberations, proposals and conclusions of our Ministers during the High level dialogue into action oriented decisions to move the process forwards and translate commitments made in Monterey into concrete actions. Another question, on which the Second Committee must focus, consists in assessing the follow up mechanisms set up by the Monterey consensus.

In the field of environment and sustainable development, with the adoption of the plan of Implementation of Johannesburg, the international community lays out a significant repertoire of commitments concerning specific goals and precise targets for the achievement of sustainable development.

Elaboration of long-term action oriented strategies supported by durable means of implementation is essential to effectively translate these commitments into concrete actions, to eradicate poverty and hunger and to ensure a prosperous and promising world for future generations.

In this respect, by the adoption this year of the multiyear program of work 2004-2017, the Commission of Sustainable Development has set up a road map which will enable it to accomplish its role and its functions, extremely significant in the United Nations system and to be used consequently as a viable forum for the consideration and review of integration of all issues related to sustainable development. The definition of the multiyear program of work is a historical asset achieved by this Commission for the assessment and monitoring of the international commitments related to sustainable development, which we should support and encourage.

The challenge the Second Committee should take up consists in keeping the momentum and giving the necessary policy guidance so that this Commission can achieve its activities with the political support.

Other bodies face the same challenge, particularly the United Nations Forum on Forests whose contribution to the achievement of the objectives of sustainable development is of paramount importance.

Moreover, the United Nations Convention to combat desertification, particularly in Africa, is another tool available to the international community to promote the objectives of sustainable development, particularly poverty eradication.

In this respect, our Committee will have to preserve the momentum generated by the 6th Conference of the Parties to the Convention to combat desertification, held recently in Havana and ensure an effective and durable implementation of the provisions of this Convention.

The Group of 77 and China welcomes the decision taken by the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification at its sixth session in Havana, designating GEF as a financial mechanism of the Convention and call upon the United Nations to declare 2004 as the International Year of Deserts and Desertification with the view to raising awareness on the phenomenon of desertification and protecting biodiversity of deserts as well as indigenous and local communities and traditional knowledge of affected countries.

Mr. Chairman,

Since the adoption in 2001 of the Program of action for the least developing countries, in Brussels, very little progress has been achieved with regard to the implementation process. The commitments made in the framework of the Program of Action were not met and the objectives relating to public aid to development have not been carried out. We have noted that the most vulnerable category of the developing countries continue to be marginalized and excluded from the benefits of globalization in spite of the multiple efforts which these countries continue to make.

The Ministerial Conference of the least developing countries held under the chairmanship of the G-77 in Marrakech on the 24th and 25th June 2003, was an occasion for these countries to reaffirm their willingness to implement the program of action of Brussels.

The Group of 77 and China appreciates the first consolidated report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The report indicates the concrete measures that some member States have taken to support NEPAD. In this regard, our Group welcomes the establishment of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa at the level of an Under-Secretary-General and calls for adequate funding for that office to enable fulfill its coordinating and advocacy mandate in support of Africa.

Mr. Chairman,

The first International Ministerial Conference on Transit Transport Cooperation (IMC) mandated by the General Assembly and convened recently in Almaty, came to reinforce and supplement the previously made commitments to meet the special needs of the landlocked developing countries as

called for in the Millennium Declaration.

This Conference led to the conclusion of a historical agreement between the landlocked and transit developing countries. The Almaty Programme of Action adopted at the landmark Conference sets up a new global framework of cooperation for and offers win-win opportunities to landlocked and transit developing countries as well as to their development partners to foster solid partnerships with a view to establishing efficient transit transport systems.

The Almaty Programme of Action also provides a series of directives for action aimed at achieving the removal of the administrative obstacles to exports of the landlocked developing countries, taking into account the legitimate concerns of the transit developing countries.

Of special importance is the due note taken for the first time ever in the Almaty Programme of Action, of the request of the LLDCs for the current WTO negotiations on market access for agricultural and non-agricultural goods to give particular attention to products of special interest of the landlocked developing countries. This keynote is, once again, stressed in the Declaration of the 27th Annual Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the G77 held in New York, on October 25, 2003.

The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are yet to achieve the objectives as laid down in the Barbados Programme of Action. A renewed commitment of the international community is paramount for the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action. In this regard, we call on the donor community to honour their commitments to the implementation of the Programme of Action and to support all efforts undertaken by the SIDS countries to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

Also, another question which should be given due consideration during this session is migration which is related to globalization and development. An increasing number of origin, transit and host countries have to take up challenges of all nature imposed by this phenomenon. A constructive and sincere dialogue among Members of the United Nations is more than ever necessary in order to better understand and control this phenomenon, particularly the migration of brains from the south to the north. In this respect, the holding of a United Nations conference on the international migration and development, will be an occasion to examine this complex issue and to identify the means of maximizing the benefits of international migration on development. We hope to be able to tackle this phenomenon with an open mind and mutual understanding

Finally, the Second Committee must ensure the follow-up to the resolution 57/270 B adopted last June by the General Assembly on the integrated and coordinated follow-up to the United Nations major conferences and Summits through a re-examination and improvement of its program of work, taking into account the current situation, and the role and responsibility of the United Nations with respect to the follow-up of the results of the major Conferences and Summits.

Mr. Chairman,

As Chairman of the G-77 and China, my country spared no effort to reach the adoption of this resolution and sincerely hopes that the forthcoming global summit of 2005 will offer an opportunity to prioritize the issue of development in the agenda of the United Nations. It is obvious that security issues are global and encompass necessarily the fight against poverty. Only hope for a better future can generate more stability and security for all.

Thank you.