

**AN ADDRESS BY H.E. MR. S. A. ADEKANYE DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA ON BEHALF OF THE G77 AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE 55TH UNGA**

**New York, 2 October 2000**

---

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I wish to congratulate you and the members of the bureau on your election. We are confident that your vast experience and knowledge of the various issues before us, will guide this Committee to a successful conclusion. I assure you of the support of our Group in that pursuit.

Mr. Chairman,

The work of the Second Committee, at the beginning of the new millennium, demands sober reflection on our development experience over several decades. We must search for answers on why the great promise and expectations of the people of the world remain unrealised. In the face of present global realities, we must determine what our priorities should be and how the United Nations should be strengthened to enable it to face old and new challenges of development; challenges that range from worsening poverty to crushing external debt; from globalisation to unemployment which have been further compounded by HIV/AIDS pandemic and other infectious diseases.

These and other global issues were discussed at the first ever-South Summit held in Havana, Cuba, in last April. That Summit was a defining moment for G-77, which pondered on the challenges of the 21st century. In Havana, we renewed our commitment to the goal of development. We also charted a new path as reflected in the Declaration and Havana Programme of Action.

The Summit also resolved to forge new and meaningful partnership with the industrialized nations. We demanded equal partnership in decision-making that affects the whole of humanity. We also demanded the creation of, and participation in, a new international financial architecture, that will strengthen the share of developing countries in the emerging global economy. That was the message our leaders took to their counterparts from major industrialized economies at their annual G-8 meeting in Japan. The outcome of that meeting, as it relates to development, and in particular to issues of concern to developing countries, has demonstrated how critical such genuine partnership is for progress and development in the twenty-first century.

Mr. Chairman,

Undoubtedly, the new millennium will continue to be shaped by the twin forces of globalisation and liberalization, with information and communication technologies as their driving force. But, we do not accept it as self evident that the benefits of globalisation should continue to be confined to a few industrialized economies, while developing countries, wallow in poverty. We know from the recent financial crisis in South East Asia that even the best performing economies of the developing countries, with robust growth rates, which have transformed them into regional economic powers, could hardly withstand the impact of globalisation. Yet, the ripple effects on the world economy as a whole are no less evident.

The effects are particularly noticeable in the developing countries of Africa and the Least Developed Countries where the standards of living of the majority of their peoples have been adversely affected. Sadly today, 1.5 billion people, mostly in the developing countries, still live below the poverty line. The challenge before this Committee is to ensure that globalisation, and tremendous opportunities, which it offers, should go beyond the integration of developing countries into global economy and trade. What we need, therefore, is globalisation of compassion to address the unacceptable poverty in developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

The defining characteristics of twenty-first century economy are based on new technologies, especially biotechnology as well as Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Opportunities provided by the array of these technologies are enormous. They are the driving forces of competition between nations and peoples in the global economy. Consequently, access to and a share in the returns from these technologies will be a crucial factor in the effective integration of developing countries in the global economy. Regrettably, the current debate on extending these technologies to developing countries has so far not gone beyond observing the growing gaps in access to new technologies. That is why we welcome the ICT Task Force and support the mandates given to the Working Group on Informatics to make recommendations regarding ICT. Let us resolve to put in place the mechanism that will enable us achieve universal connectivity in developing countries. This will require innovative approaches to provide community connectivity and establish a multipurpose and multimedia community information centres that will accommodate those on the lower income levels.

Mr. Chairman,

External debt is one area that needs urgent solution. The heavy debt burden has become the greatest obstacle in tackling underdevelopment in developing countries. That is why we welcome the efforts to resolve the debt problem and in particular various initiatives, including the reinvigoration of the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. However, it is manifest that these initiatives have not fundamentally tackled the problem. A bold and decisive action is required to cover all categories of debts. There is, therefore, an urgent need to cancel outright the debt of developing countries to enable them revamp their economies and address urgent social and economic problems.

Mr. Chairman,

There is the dire need for renewed commitment on the part of the international community to give special priority to the development needs of Least Developed Countries. It is for that reason that we welcome the progress achieved at the First Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the Third UN Conference on Least Developed Countries held in New York, from 24 to 28 July 2000. Our Group fully endorses the proposal for convening a meeting of the Preparatory Committee and urge the international community to reflect their political commitment in special initiatives that would enable Least Developed Countries (LDC) overcome poverty.

Mr. Chairman,

The HIV/AIDS pandemic and other contagious diseases pose tremendous challenge to the health and security of our humanity. Their negative impact is already evident in a number of developing countries, including Africa. Our world leaders at the just concluded Millennium Summit have given us the mandate to energetically work for a solution. We believe that the Special Session of the General Assembly scheduled for September 2001 will play a major role in addressing these problems. Our Group intends to play an active role

at the Session.

Mr. Chairman,

Our Group has, over the years, decried the continuing decline of resources to implement the agenda for development by various agencies and bodies of the United Nations System. This has adversely affected the various development programmes of developing countries. Our Group is, therefore, committed to the success of the International Intergovernmental High-level Event on Financing for Development to be held in 2001. We urge the active and effective participation of all countries in the preparatory process as well as the conference. It is essential that all relevant stakeholders participate in the conference so that a secure basis would be established for enhanced and predictable funding for development.

Mr. Chairman,

Turning to the issues of environment and sustainable development, our Group is concerned with the lack of progress on the implementation of the principles and commitments of Rio, particularly in the areas of financial resources, capacity building, and transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies (EST) on concessional terms. It is regrettable that eight years after Rio, commitments made are yet to be fulfilled. In our view, Rio+10 should focus on identifying challenges and constraints in the implementation of Agenda 21. Under no circumstances should the Conference be used as a platform for the renegotiation of Agenda 21.

Mr. Chairman,

We remain fully committed to the principles enshrined in the Kyoto Protocol of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. To achieve its full implementation, the developed countries must undertake urgent and effective steps to honour their commitments, principally in the areas of transfer of technologies, capacity-building, official development assistance (ODA), which are so dear to developing countries. These should be treated with the same urgency and on the same pace with Clean Development Mechanism and other of areas of interest to developed countries.

Of course, there are other areas of environment with which many developing countries must grapple. One of these includes desertification. We are concerned with the lack of resources to support the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Time has come to treat the issue of desertification with the same high profile given to other main Conventions on environment. The forthcoming conference of parties in Bonn in December 2000 provides an opportunity to demonstrate global interest and commitment in that regard.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, the stability and indeed the growth of our increasingly integrated world economy demand that the countries of the North and the South forge genuine partnership for development. The Millennium Declaration provides us the road map for such partnership. Let us, in this Committee, walk that road, so that our decisions will impact positively on the lives of the peoples of the world.

I thank you.