

**ADDRESS BY H.E. CHIEF ARTHUR C.I. MBANEFO MFR, AMBASSADOR,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, TO THE  
TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE CHAIRMEN/COORDINATORS OF THE  
CHAPTERS OF THE GROUP OF 77**

**Geneva, 8 June 2000**

---

Distinguished Chairman of the Geneva Chapter of the Group of 77  
His Excellency Ambassador Khorram,  
Distinguished Chairmen and Coordinators of the G-77 Chapters,  
Excellencies,  
Representatives of UNCTAD,  
Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I feel highly privileged and honoured to be with you here this morning. This meeting is coming at a critical time in the history of the G-77. Following closely as it does on the heels of our historical South Summit in Havana last April, it will provide an excellent opportunity for our Chapters to coordinate their activities in implementing the Declaration and Programme of Action that were adopted by the Summit.

I think it is no exaggeration to say that the South Summit was a turning point in the history of our Group. Attended by representatives of all G-77 countries, most of them at the level of Heads of State and Government, it demonstrated the seriousness with which we as a Group approach the changing global environment, which compels all of our nations to reassess and redefine South-South cooperation as well as North-South relations.

When I look back on Havana, one achievement in particular stands out: the momentum which was built around strengthening the negotiating capacity of the Group of 77. In this regard, the Chairman of the Summit was mandated to present the outcome of the Summit to the Group of 8 at its forthcoming meeting, to be held in Okinawa, Japan, this July. In addition, he will present the Summit's position to the Millennium Assembly at the UN in September. Currently the Group is also working on inputs to the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Brussels next May, and to the high-level event on financing for development. To further strengthen this capacity the Summit agreed to enhance coordination between the Group of 77 and the Non-Aligned Movement.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

With the giant steps taken by the G-77 in Havana after 36 years by hosting such a successful South Summit, the next obvious task before the Group must be how to coordinate the contributions of our Chapters in their respective areas of competence. This can best be achieved through better coordination. Geneva, for example, excels in dealing with trade and development issues. Vienna is outstanding on industrialization matters. Nairobi, of course, focuses on the environment field, and Rome has the expertise on food and agriculture

questions. Science and technology are the hallmarks of our Paris Chapter. The G-24 in Washington is concerned with financial and monetary issues. As to New York, where the UN is headquartered, I believe it is especially important to capitalize on our coordinating role in the General Assembly, where the efforts of all the Chapters finally come to fruition. Hence the need for an efficient, vibrant and well-funded secretariat. In the words of the Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria at the South Summit “*the current situation of maintaining a skeleton staff in New York places too much burden on the country that assumes chairmanship of our Group. Perhaps more importantly it hampers the effective implementation of our programmes*”.

It is therefore important that we consider acceptable coordinating mechanism among our chapters to keep up the momentum of implementing the Programme of Action as well as providing strategic guidance and vision to the G.77, particularly in the crucial areas of North-South dialogue and South-South cooperation.

However, let me proceed to take stock, if only briefly, of the two main intergovernmental events of special concern to us held so far this year: these are UNCTAD X, and the South Summit.

UNCTAD X, which was the first global conference on economic issues in the new millennium, focused on development strategies, the effects of globalization and the role UNCTAD should play in the coming years. I am proud to report that the G-77 played a major role in setting the agenda and spelling out the issues for negotiation. The Conference brought together all the key players in the development process. Speakers, who included Heads of State and Government and heads of several key international organizations, stressed the difficulties of managing development in the context of globalization and a rapidly changing economic environment. They voiced their disappointment in what has been called the “Washington consensus” and called for a new development paradigm. Given the increased volatility of world financial markets and their devastating effects on developing countries, a call was made for the urgent reform of the international financial architecture. Similarly, participants seemed generally to feel that the multilateral trading system would have to be made more equitable and rules-based if globalization is to be more balanced.

I am happy to say that much of the consensus reached in Bangkok is also reflected in the South Summit Declaration and Programme of Action, which together comprise a new economic agenda for the South. The Declaration highlighted the need for a new spirit of cooperation based on common but differential responsibilities between the developing and industrialized countries. It urged a search for a concrete mechanism to guarantee full and effective participation by the South in international decision-making, on an equal basis with developed countries. It also vigorously advocated the revitalization of the United Nations so that it can play its central role in world development issues.

The Programme of Action covered four key subjects: globalization; knowledge and technology; South-South cooperation; and North-South relations. On globalization, it urged for improved market access for the exports of developing countries and the elimination of protectionist measures. It also provided for the free movement of natural persons, in which developing countries have comparative advantage in the global economy, and called for enhancing the role of multilateral institutions in addressing the economic and social development priorities of our countries.

In the area of knowledge and technology, there was a clear commitment to the eradication of illiteracy and the promotion of education for all throughout life. The Group expressed determination to work together as countries of the South in such areas as bio-engineering, communications, and software development, *inter alia* through exchanges between South-South scientific and research institutions and the establishment of a South-South R&D network.

South-South cooperation is even more crucial given the increasing differentiation in the levels of development amongst the developing countries. In that regard, it was decided to expand the Global System of Trade Preferences among developing countries; to establish linkages between the stock exchanges and secondary bond markets of the regions of the South; to share information and expertise; and to pursue existing technical cooperation agreements.

The Summit expressed concern over the current state of the North-South dialogue and therefore stressed need to restore the focus on development in international relations as well as to correct the imbalance in the operation of the international economic system. The Summit Chairman was therefore requested to convey the Group's common concerns and interests to our developed partners and to strengthen existing international arrangements within the UN system in coordination with other groupings of the South. The Group committed itself to work towards outright cancellation of unsustainable debt of developing countries and towards universal membership in the World Trade Organization.

Finally, the Havana Programme of Action also made specific recommendations on institutional follow-up. You can find these, as well as the agreed conclusions on South-South cooperation and the other decisions taken at the Summit, in the documents we have made available at this meeting.

My Dear Friends,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

As we now draw closer to four other milestone intergovernmental events namely the Review of the World Summit on Social Development, or "Copenhagen Plus Five"; the Millennium Summit of the General Assembly; the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries; and the High-Level Event on Financing for Development, let us join together in addressing the most daunting challenge of underdevelopment. Our consensus on the strategies to be pursued should lend added impetus to our action. It is clear that UNCTAD, as the focal point in the UN system for the integrated treatment of trade and development and the interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development, should continue its pioneering work. It should at the same time help to build a consensus on policies and options relating to an all inclusive development perspective.

As a result of our labours in Havana, it is clearer than ever that the Group of 77 has a vital part to play in shaping a new agenda for the United Nations in the twenty-first century. Let us, through our efforts at the Chapters level and in our larger gatherings, define that role and prepare ourselves fully to pursue it. I am confident we can play this historic role to perfection and in so doing reaffirm the spirit of our founding fathers to strengthen the solidarity of our organization and contribute to a better life for our peoples. Finally let me conclude by quoting the words of President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria "*there should be no doubt that from here we go forward, determined to make a difference to the rapidly*

*evolving global economic and social order. From now on, we will play our part in shaping that order into one that is just, fair, equitable and mutually beneficial to all sides. As many of us have intimated, it is indeed time to recover our fighting spirit, time to recharge our irrepressible desire for unity and solidarity, and time to infuse cohesion into our common destiny. It is time to fulfil the expectations of our people. It is time to turn our South-South Cooperation into a potent instrument of development and progress in our countries”.*

Thank you.