



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MRS. ANNETTE MCKENZIE,  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, STATISTICAL INSTITUTE OF JAMAICA, AT THE THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION  
OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION (New York, 1 March 2005)**

Madam Chairperson,

I take the floor on behalf of the Group of 77 and China to thank the Bureau for its report on the review of the working methods of the Commission, as contained in document E/CN.3/2005/2. We welcome the attention being given to this particular issue given our common interests in advancing the work of the Commission in promoting the improvement of statistics and statistical methods in general. Please be assured of the full support of the Group of 77 and China in this endeavour.

As the focal point in the UN for the system-wide coordination of statistical programmes, the technical work undertaken by the Statistical Commission provides an important intergovernmental platform for the creation of an integrated system in the collection, processing and dissemination of international statistics. The Group, therefore, supports the further strengthening of the work of the Commission within the UN system. It is against this background and in the spirit of cooperation that we wish to share with the distinguished members of the Commission, some brief observations on the proposals advanced in the Bureau's report.

Madam Chairperson,

Let me state from the outset that the Group gives general support to those recommendations in the report, aimed at improving time management and ensuring the timely submission of official documentation, and the attempt to ensure that the perspectives of both developed and developing country experts are fully taken into account in the development of the agenda for Commission sessions. We would also like to support the thrust of the ideas advanced with respect to the work of the Commission with the ECOSOC and other functional commissions.

We welcome, in particular, the recognition of the financial constraints which hinder the participation of experts from developing countries in international meetings and the need for support to be extended to assist countries in identifying suitable sources of funding to overcome such obstacles. We are pleased that attention is being drawn to this particular problem and would wish to strongly recommend its effective implementation so that through their participation in the ongoing global discourse, developing countries can be better equipped to strengthen their statistical systems.

Madam Chairperson,

We agree that the Commission should be allowed to discharge its responsibilities, in accordance with its mandate under the ECOSOC, and that the focus should be on its area of technical expertise. While appreciative of the need to maintain this focus, we are concerned about the perception that the work of the Commission could be compromised through statements delivered on behalf of a group of countries, as suggested in paragraph 14. We believe that there should be opportunity for all member states to engage in the deliberations of the Commission, whether individually or through coordinated group positions, without prejudice to the technical nature of the work of the Commission. For developing countries, this is of particular importance in advancing prospects for statistical capacity-building, among other issues. Any decision to change the existing modus operandi would therefore have to be the subject of intergovernmental consultations and subsequent agreement. Accordingly, any attempt to prejudge which are the political issues should be further reviewed.

The Group of 77 and China agrees that the Commission should have the flexibility to adjust, where necessary, its priorities and methods to meet new requirements and maintain a balance between matters of current concern and the longer-term development aspects of the statistical system. We therefore view with interest the proposal to distinguish between documents "for discussion" and documents "for information." This novel idea could be explored, in full consultation with Member States, so that there is clarity on the methodology to be employed in distinguishing between agenda items. We would also like to support the suggestion that the session report of the Commission be adopted during the actual session of the Commission. To this end, the proposals advanced in paragraph 10 should be reconsidered. We believe that the procedure employed during the 35th Session of the Commission offers the best option for strengthening the methods of work of the Commission.

I thank you Madam Chairperson.

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