



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. ANDRIES OOSTHUIZEN, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 3(K): DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS AT THE THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION (New York, 9 March 2006)**

Chairperson,

The Group of 77 and China welcomes the opportunity to share its views on the reports currently before the Commission for its consideration. We welcome, in particular, the attention drawn to the need for statistical capacity building in developing countries, especially the focus on the importance of the provision of financial support and technical assistance to developing countries.

Concerns raised by the report by the Friends of the Chair, such as the concern that some indicators are poorly reported, but also that data used in various United Nations reports are not being thoroughly questioned, even arguing that in some cases that it does not reflect reality, are critical issues that need further consideration. The seriousness of the issue is further underlined when bearing in mind that information provided by the UN is regarded as "having high integrity" and that the provision of these statistics often influence the way developing countries are perceived. It is therefore important that developing countries are provided with the assistance and support to take control of their own statistical development, by providing them with the necessary tools to develop their own capacity.

The Group of 77 is however concerned that paragraph 52, relating to indicators associated with MDG8, of the report by the Friends of the Chair is not in accordance with the mandate provided to the Statistical Commission by the General Assembly resolution 57/270 B.

As stated last year already, the Group regard the development and use of indicators, as far as the implementation of the international development goals, of primary importance. As the intergovernmental system-wide focal point to deal with this issue, we believe that the role of the Commission should be further strengthened within the UN system. Against this background and while mindful of the work which has been undertaken to date, we would wish to reiterate the need for greater emphasis to be placed on indicators for monitoring implementation of the MDG Goal 8. Such a focus would be in keeping with several UN resolutions, notably paragraph 32 of General Assembly resolution 57/270B, which "stressed the need to apply and further develop indicators on means of implementation to evaluate progress towards conference goals in creating an enabling environment for development."

We underscore the importance of building upon the work undertaken by the statistical Commission in the past years in regard to the assessment of the statistical indicators derived from United Nations summit meetings with a view to further refining and updating it.

I thank you.