



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. MR. BYRON BLAKE,
AMBASSADOR/DEPUTY-PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED
NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 52: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (New York, 2 November 2005)**

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to address you on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on Item 52; Sustainable Development. In the nature of sustainable development – involving as it does economic, environmental and social issues in development - we are required to address a number of fundamental, inter-related and mutually dependent issues vital to long-term overall development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

52(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

Mr. Chairman,

We thank the Secretary General for his Report in document A/60/261 issued in response to General Assembly Resolution 59/227, which focuses on the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development in its 13 th session (CSD XIII), held earlier this year.

Over the past 15 years or so the international community has worked out an extensive plan for global sustainable development, specifically, to assist developing countries to achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development. As this plan is reflected in Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), the G-77 and China finds it necessary only to remind of the range of development related areas in which commitments have been made, the principles agreed to guide action as formalized in the “Rio Principles” and in particular the operational principle of common but differentiated responsibility.

The international community has also placed responsibility for monitoring and guiding implementation of the agreements in the General Assembly and more specifically the Economic and Social Council, through the Commission on Sustainable Development.

The Commission on Sustainable Development agreed in its eleventh session to focus on three issue areas – water, sanitation, and human settlements in its first 2-year implementation cycle.

The Secretary-General’s Report indicates, *inter alia*, that:

- There was active and strong participation by Governments and Civil Society in the work of the CSD on these issues;
- CSD has proposed some 30 policy options - recognizing that no single set of policies can serve all States - and about 100 practical measures and actions to accelerate development in the three targeted areas;
- There was a broad range of implementation activities at all levels;
- There is significant enhancement in the coordination of the work of various UN agencies and programmes through the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB);
- There were some 300 partnerships registered with the CSD Secretariat; and
- The UN Regional Commissions and Offices, Regional Development Banks and other Regional Organisations have begun to prioritise and to have programmes for sustainable development.

These are all positive developments which are welcomed by the G-77 and China.

But,

Mr. Chairman,

The Secretary-General’s Report has also highlighted:

- The challenge we face to ensure effective follow-up to the policy decisions on water, sanitation and human settlements. We recall that these are areas in which many countries and regions will be challenged to meet the Millennium Development Goals; and

- The need for financial and technical assistance to National and Local Authorities to deal effectively with sewage and waste water. Limited financial and technical assistance has, in fact, been recognized as the major constraint in all three targeted areas as well as in all other development oriented action areas identified in the UN Summits and Conferences;

The Group of 77 and China therefore welcomes the recommendations relating to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the JPOI, in particular, the urging to Governments to continue to implement their commitments; the call to support the Commission on Sustainable Development; and the call on donor governments and international financial institutions to provide funding to assist developing countries to implement the decisions of CSD XIII. We assume that the targeting in the recommendations is not intended to signal the shifting of funds from other areas, but to additional resources, given the number of complementary areas which must also be addressed simultaneously.

Mr. Chairman,

The Secretary-General's Report points to the second implementation cycle in which CSD will address the issues of "Energy, climate change, industrial development, and atmosphere/ air pollution". These are all critical issues. The G-77 and China would request the Secretary-General, in his next Report, to give equal treatment to each theme and to focus on the implementation of the commitments as agreed in the JPOI. It would also be important for the Secretariat to provide Member States with statistics on the status of implementation of the relevant commitments as agreed in the MDGs, JPOI and the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol.

The Secretary-General has reported optimistically on the development of partnerships. There are some 300 partnerships registered with the CSD secretariat. The G-77 and China would wish the CSD to continue to monitor this area critically since the vast majority of the partnerships registered were among governments or inter-governmental organizations. There were not many private/private or private/public partnerships. Yet, it is in the involvement of the private partners that new resources – financial and technical – would be generated. Further, many of the partnership proposals were in the formulation or development phase and not yet in implementation mode. Results come with implementation.

The Secretary-General's Report referred to the role of the CEB, of inter-agency collaborative mechanisms and of the need for refinement in the method of work of the Commission. The G-77 and China recognises the need to highlight these issues. We would wish to be assured, however, that no innovation will affect the nature of the Commission or the responsibility of governments to determine policy and give policy guidance and direction.

I turn now to:

Item 52 (b) Follow-up and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States

Mr. Chairman,

The G-77 and China thank the Secretary-General for his very comprehensive report on the outcome of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for Small Island Developing States held in Mauritius on 10-14 January 2005. The Secretary-General has indicated that it is an interim response to General Assembly resolution 59/311 which called for a plan for the coherent implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

The Report recalls, *inter alia*:

- The reaffirmation by the International Meeting of the continued validity of the Programme of Action as a blue print for support to Small Island Developing States;
- The Indian Ocean Tsunami, as the backdrop to the International Meeting, which laid bare the vulnerability of Small Islands and low-lying coastal states to environmental hazards,
- The renewed political commitment to support the sustainable development strategies of Small Island Developing States through technical and financial cooperation, institutional assistance and an improved international enabling environment. Also, the recognition of the importance of capacity-building, technology transfer and human resource development to building the resilience of SIDS and the implementation of the Programme of Action;
- General Assembly resolution 59/311 which, among other things, mandated the mainstreaming of the Mauritius Strategy in the work programme of relevant agencies of the United Nations; and
- The decision of CSD at its thirteenth session to devote one day of the review session of the Commission each

cycle to review the Mauritius Strategy.

Mr. Chairman,

The Secretary-General's Report has also provided very useful information on the efforts at coordination and rationalisation within the United Nations system and the agencies active in different aspects of the Mauritius Strategy. In this regard the matrix annexed to the Report is most helpful.

The G-77 and China also appreciates the initiatives being proposed for action in the UN Secretariat under the policy direction of the CSD and with the technical support of the department of Economic and Social Affairs. The G-77 and China is, however, concerned at the capacity for the delivery of the vital technical support and that there are no special proposals in the report to enhance the small technical unit.

The G-77 and China is also concerned that, in the area of governance, the only developments are in respect of what the Small Island Developing States are doing and the effort of UN agencies to assist them. No activity has been identified in the area of global governance to enhance coherence and create the improved international enabling environment. It is particularly disturbing that in the critical areas of trade and finance there is no report of work by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) or the international financial institutions to specifically address the challenges to these states.

Mr. Chairman,

The G-77 and China hopes that with the recognition of the special needs and vulnerabilities of SIDS by the 2005 World Summit and the re-affirmation of commitments to take urgent and concrete action to address them through the full and effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy there will now be a more positive response from all international institutions and donor governments.

We look forward to the report of the Secretary-General to CSDXIV in 2006.

International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Mr. Chairman,

Highest number of tropical storms and hurricanes in any Atlantic season; strongest hurricane on record; most costly hurricane on record, one of the deadliest tsunamis on record, one of the deadliest earthquakes on record, rainiest month, hottest day – just examples as records continue to tumble in the area of phenomena leading to natural disasters. Records, not at random, but with predictable certainty.

In a well known area of human endeavour, when records fell with similar predictable regularity, the international community came together, placed the spotlight on the issue and followed the trail. It led to human intervention – steroid use.

Is there human intervention in the natural order of things? Is Planet Earth on steroids?

It is against the background of increasing and increasingly destructive natural disasters in 2004, now bettered in 2005, that the international community met in Kobe, Japan, in January 2005, to review the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World, and to update the framework on disaster reduction for the twenty-first century. Ten years into the Strategy; more and more destructive natural disasters, not fewer.

The G-77 and China thanks the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction contained in document A/60/180. The Report inter alia:

- highlights the background to the Conference set, as it was against the backdrop of the Indian Ocean Tsunami; the level of participation and the political will manifested to move to action and to apply available human and technical resources to the search for solutions in disaster-prone countries and regions around the world;
- outlines the essential elements of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 for disaster reduction, the roles and responsibilities of governments, regional organizations and institutions and of international organizations including the United Nations system and the international financial institutions; and
- also outlines follow-up actions by the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system since the Conference.

The G-77 and China takes particular note that the international financial institutions are specifically called upon to

integrate the goals of the Hyogo Framework into their own strategies and to operate within existing coordination mechanisms such as the United Nations Development Group. This approach should increase the coherence between international and national action and among international actors which the G-77 and China has been requesting for years. The Group looks forward to the matrix of commitments and initiatives and the detailed information on the distribution of tasks being prepared by the Task Force.

The G-77 and China welcomes the enhanced coordination within the UN system on the thematic areas and the effort towards multi hazard response, and, in that context the Group appreciates the quick response of the international community to develop an early warning system for tsunamis in the Indian Ocean. However the Group considers that this is an opportunity for the creation of a Global Tsunami or Multiple Hazard Early Warning System(s). This concept has been accepted by the 2005 World Summit where leaders committed to practical international cooperation to “work expeditiously towards the establishment of a worldwide early warning system for all natural hazards with regional nodes”

The issues raised in the report of the substantial additional effort and resources needed to create a fully-fledged multi-hazard early warning system is important, but should be viewed in the context of the expressed determination of leaders to address the issue and the loss of lives, the economic losses and the cost of emergency relief and reconstruction. Evaluated against these criteria, decisions will be more clear. In that regard, the G-77 and China looks to the Third International Conference on Early Warning scheduled to be held in Germany in March 2006.

The G-77 and China supports the Secretary-General’s proposal for the United Nations to take a leadership role in developing comprehensive global capacities for systematic, people centred early warning systems covering all hazards and countries and communities.

The G-77 and China views favourably the Secretary General’s proposals for strengthening the system to backstop the coherent implementation of the Hyogo Framework. We highlight the roles in support to national and regional disaster risk reduction platforms, resource mobilization, tracking and reporting, and in coordination.

The G-77 and China supports broadly the recommendations in the Report. These, however should be upgraded to take account of the decisions of political leaders as reflected in the 2005 World Summit Outcome document.

d) Protection of Global Climate for Present and Future Generations of Mankind

Mr. Chairman,

Protection of global climate is one of the most important issues facing the international community but one on which positions are still sharply divided. There are however, some issues on which there has been consensus, which have been reaffirmed at major summits and conferences.

There is agreement and commitment at the highest political level to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns with developed countries taking the lead and all countries benefiting from the process. Implementation was called for in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and reiterated at the 2005 World Summit. The G-77 believes that in implementation on a scale that will make a difference.

Member States have made commitments under various international Conventions and agreements to mitigate the impact of humans on the climate system. As late as six weeks ago at the 2005 World Summit, leaders emphasised the need to meet all commitments and obligations undertaken under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and other relevant international agreements. Members of the Kyoto Protocol included their commitment under that instrument.

The G-77 and China thanks the Secretary-General for his brief report which focuses on the outcome of COP X held in Buenos Aires in December 2004. The Group would wish to draw attention to the information that 123 out of 148 developing countries had already presented their initial national communication and to the reaffirmation of Parties to their commitments implementing the framework for capacity-building in developing countries.

The G-77 and China considers that the Eleventh meeting of the COP (COP XI) and the First Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol COP/MOP 1) in Montreal, Canada in the next four weeks will be a critical occasion. We are concerned that in spite of the optimism shown at COP X, there is a very low level of consensus at this late stage.

The G-77 and China would wish to draw attention to the commitment at the 2005 World Summit to practical international cooperation in the range of areas in paragraphs 55 of the Outcome Document. The commitment to

assist developing countries particularly those with special needs, is highlighted.

There is now urgency in converting words into practical action.

The G-77 and China can support the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report but would suggest that these be updated to reflect the positions in the 2005 Summit document as well as our concern at the vast differences in positions on the eve of COP XI.

(g) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those countries Experiencing Serious Droughts and/or desertification, Particularly in Africa

Mr. Chairman,

The G-77 and China would wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the Desertification Convention in document A/60/171.

The Report draws attention to:

- General Assembly resolution 59/235 which, among other things, invited the Global Environment Facility to strengthen the focal area of land degradation; and,
- The effort at implementation of General Assembly resolution 59/235 as it relates to the implementation of the Convention on Desertification in support of the achievement of the internationally agreed goals including those contained in the Millennium Declaration;

The G-77 and China appreciates the information in the report and by the Executive Secretary this morning in particular, that the resources allocated by the GEF to the focal area has been over-subscribed and that consideration is being given to increasing the resources under GEF-4. There is no lack of absorption capacity. Also, that synergies are being pursued with the other conventions and that these relationships are being strengthened.

The G-77 and China notes the underlying message in the Secretary-General's Report and again in the Executive Secretary's statement this morning of the resource difficulty. The Group is concerned at this, in the light of the current food situation in Africa, the challenge to meet the MDGs and the emphasis placed on agriculture and rural development by the 2005 Summit.

The G-77 and China supports the recommendations in the Report. In this regard, the Group expresses its deep concern that on this very day when the United Nations is launching the International Year of Deserts and Desertification – to be observed next year – there remains a huge gap between commitments made at the highest political level, including by this Assembly, and action at the level of the Conference of the Parties and also at the national level. This affects virtually all aspects of the implementation of the Convention. So it is that even with the full embrace of the Convention by the GEF Assembly, some State Parties are still questioning the existence of a relationship with the Convention. In the area of resources, the Convention is one of the most under-funded and unsupported in the UN system. And yet, at the recently-concluded Seventh Conference of the Parties held in Nairobi, UN Member States could do no better than to approve a 5% nominal increase to the core budget for the next biennium. This, even though they were assured that this increase would translate to some 14 posts out of 60 or 25 percent being frozen. This, at the time we are expecting the Secretariat to work to promote the International year.

The Group is even more alarmed at the continued situation of arrears in contributions. We insist, here that this Assembly hear, support and place on record, the specific request made by members of the G77 and China at COP 7, that the Executive Secretary of the Convention be

[quote] "Authorise[d] to enter into arrangements with any developing country party with unpaid contributions for two or more years who so wishes, to mutually agree on a 'schedule of payments' for such a Party, to clear all outstanding unpaid contributions within six years depending on the financial circumstances of that Party, and pay future contributions on time...."

The G-77 and China deeply regrets that the COP was unable to include this language in the final decision on programme and budget, as it represented a powerful expression of our – commitment to this Convention poor as we are. We continue to be baffled by the opposition to its inclusion and challenge this Assembly to ask 'why'? We use this forum to urge those developed country parties who are also in arrears to clear these arrears, and their consciences – in full.

Closing

Mr. Chairman,

These issues are vital to survival of several Member States, if not life as we know it. The General Assembly must act boldly and decisively.

I thank you.