



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR. TAIB FASSI FIHRI, MINISTER DELEGATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND COOPERATION OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO AT THE TURN-OVER CEREMONY OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA FOR THE YEAR 2004 (New York, 16 January 2004)**

Mr. Secretary General,  
Mr. Administrator,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very honored to address this honorable gathering at the end of the mandate of the chairmanship that the Group of 77 and China entrusted to the Kingdom of Morocco for the year 2003.

On this occasion, allow me to thank warmly, on behalf of my country, all those who assisted the delegation of Morocco to accomplish its mission in good conditions.

I cordially thank the Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the good and praise-worthy efforts he continues to make since his appointment at the head of the United Nations Organization in favor of development and international peace and security.

The Group of 77 and China is grateful to you Mr. Secretary General for the marks of sympathy and support that you have always shown towards the concerns of our Group and its legitimate claims in economic and social development.

I, also, seize this opportunity to express, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, my sincere gratitude to Mr. Mark Malloch Brown, UNDP Administrator, for the permanent availability of his institution to support the efforts of South countries for a better future.

Finally, I express my warmest thanks to all members of the Group of 77 and China for their precious help to my country. I am delighted with the spirit of consultation and solidarity that prevails in our Group and which helped us to consolidate our acquired experience and to defend our strategic interests.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since its election as a Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, my country has endeavored to continue the efforts aiming at defending our Group interests and making the international community aware of the Group's major concerns and aspirations to fulfillment and development.

As you have noticed, my country has assumed the Chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China at a crucial moment. Thus, while faced with challenges of globalization, our Group has set as a matter of priority, the translation into action of the commitments undertaken by the international community in the field of economic and social development.

It is in this perspective that our Group took the initiative of setting up an Ad hoc Committee in charge of reviewing the most appropriate ways to ensure an integrated and coordinated follow-up and implementation of the recommendations stemming from the Conferences and Summits held under the aegis of the United Nations in the economic and social fields.

The Chairmanship, in consultation with the members, seized this opportunity to reach, with the partners of our Group, a promising consensus on the best possible strategy capable of materializing the commitments of the international community in favor of development. Thus, we have achieved positive results in the Committee with the adoption of the resolution 57/270 B, which constitutes a first landmark on the way of achieving the internationally agreed goals.

With the adoption of this resolution, our Group succeeded in achieving notable advantages for the development cause, in particular:

- The organization of a Summit on development in 2005, which will allow the international community to take stock of

the degree of the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through an objective assessment of the major issues pertaining to development as international trade and financing for development,

- The strengthening of the role of ECOSOC and the General Assembly as well as the improvement of the role of the United Nations System as a whole in the follow-up and implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conferences and Summits,

- The harmonization of the international economic and financial policies within the work of the High-level Annual Meeting of ECOSOC with Bretton Woods Institutions and WTO, to which the UNCTAD is henceforth associated.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Considering the importance which our Group attaches to the involvement of the United Nations and in particular the ECOSOC in promoting an international strategy in favor of development, the chairmanship has worked for upholding the interests and positions of developing countries towards all the issues on the agenda of this organ, especially, at its substantive session held this year in Geneva in July 2003.

In this context, the Chairmanship has not missed the opportunity of the High-level debate of this session to bring out the urgent need to create an international economic environment in favor of rural development and poverty eradication.

We have, strongly, recalled that the materialization of such a goal requires the setting of mechanisms in favor of rural development financing and market access for products originating from developing countries through, particularly, the elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers, reduction of export subsidies of agricultural products and the setting up of appropriate mechanisms with a view to easing the negative impact of the decline and fluctuations of commodity prices on the incomes of developing countries.

We have, also, seized this occasion to recall that external debt constitutes a heavy burden for the economies of developing countries, calling for an urgent and adequate treatment with a view to freeing financial resources, which can be devoted to the reinforcement of rural development policies and the fight against poverty.

Furthermore, the chairmanship has seized this opportunity to reaffirm the positions of the Group of 77 and China on the issues addressed in the different segments, in particular:

- The fact that the regular resources constitute the core of the United Nations system operational activities for development and they are essential to the maintaining of their multilateral, neutral and universal character,

- The call on donor countries to increase in a substantial and predictable manner their contributions to the core budgets of the United Nations organisms and the necessity of the participation of the national authorities in the assessment of the operational activities on the field,

- The importance for ECOSOC to take advantage from the outcomes of the Ad hoc Group on the integrated and coordinated follow-up of the United Nations Conferences and Summits,

- The importance of the extension of the mandate of the Special Consultative Group on Guinea-Bissau, the creation of a similar Group on Burundi and the launching of a long-term Program of assistance in favor of Haiti, which constitute a positive response of the international community to the concerns that we had expressed, many times, regarding the urgency to elaborate Programs of assistance for the most vulnerable members of our Group and particularly those emerging from a conflict situation,

- The need to face the increase of natural disasters, in developing countries, by giving priority to reducing vulnerability conditions through a global approach based on international cooperation, capacity building at the national and local levels, transfer of appropriate technologies and development of alarm systems, that can help the identification and warning against natural threats,

- The need to respond, in an adequate manner, to the specific problems of the least developed countries suffering from armed conflicts, natural disasters and other urgent situations,

- The appeal for international mobilization in favor of the Global Fund against HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The chairmanship has seized the occasion of the 11th session of the Commission on sustainable development (CSD) to reaffirm that the Rio Declaration, the Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of implementation, constitute an indivisible set of commitments, which should define the frame of work of the Commission and its future orientations.

While having welcomed the partnerships launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, we recalled the importance of the multilateral cooperation in the achievement of the goals stated in the Johannesburg Plan of implementation which clearly stresses the need for a substantial increase of the financial flows to developing countries with a view to supporting their national policies and programs, improving their participation in the international trade and favoring their access to the environmentally sound technologies.

We have, also, emphasized that if poverty eradication is considered today as an essential condition to the achievement of sustainable development goals, the Commission has to pay particular attention to the situation in Africa, LDCs and Small Island Developing States.

From an other side and in order to improve the contribution of the Commission to the implementation of the international community's commitments on sustainable development, we have been able to obtain that the review of Agenda 21 and Johannesburg Plan of implementation be carried out within a multi-year programme of work (2004-2017) spread over five sessions and devote the sixth session to an overall assessment of the implementation of the commitments made with respect to sustainable development goals and objectives.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As far as the crucial issue of financing for development is concerned, we have always recalled the importance that our Group attaches to the implementation of the recommendations of the Monterrey Consensus in order to achieve optimal mobilization of national financial resources and international financial flows in favor of the development process.

In this respect, we have stressed that the materialization of this ambitious goal could be achieved through a specific treatment of the external debt problem, a substantial increase of the Official Development Assistance and a sustained promotion of Foreign Direct Investment.

In this regard, we have seized the occasion of the Annual Meeting between ECOSOC, Bretton Woods institutions and WTO as well as the High-level dialogue on financing and development to defend the following positions:

- The need, after many international Conferences on economic and social issues, to focus, without delay, on real and effective implementation of the agreed commitments and to mobilize the political will and the means to reach this goal,
- The duty of developed countries to work towards the creation of an international economic environment in favor of development by adopting national policies that are coherent and compatible with the development goals agreed at the international level,
- The efforts made by the developing countries in the field of economic reforms should be promoted through additional actions from developed countries towards the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, namely, the Official Development Assistance and the debt problem,
- The necessity to ensure the effective participation of developing countries to decision-making process in the international financial institutions, and to strengthen coordination between the United Nations and the international institutions dealing with the development issue, in accordance with the Monterrey Consensus which recognizes the urgency to improve coherence of international monetary, financial and trade systems,
- The need for the international financial institutions to integrate development goals approved by the United Nations, taking into account the strategies and policies decided by developing countries. It is in this context that we have reiterated our appeal for a clear, effective and immediate support to NEPAD, which cannot achieve the expected goals without the support and the firm commitment of the international community.



Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As far as social issues are concerned, our Group has kept up its endeavors to implement the recommendations of Copenhagen Summit on Social Development and the 24th extraordinary session of the General Assembly.

In this context, it is worth underlying the reaffirmation, by the Committee of social development, of the importance of enhancing the international cooperation with a view to helping developing countries to fulfill their objectives of development, particularly poverty eradication.

Our Group has also endeavored to promote women's rights and the necessity of their participation, on an equal footing, in all political, economic and social activities and this pursuant to the recommendations of the Beijing Plan of Action and the 23rd special session of the General Assembly.

Concerning the Commission on the status (CSW) of woman, it has recognized once again, under our Group's impetus, the necessity to help Palestinian women to promote their rights and improve their life conditions in order to take part in the development of their society.

In other respect, we have underlined, within the Committee of information, the necessity for the Organization of the United Nations to speak up in favor of dialogue and tolerance, in a world more and more haunted by the specter of violence and extremism.

The Group also emphasized that the new United Nations Communication strategy should be guided by the priorities set up in the Millennium Declaration.

On the same topic, we have focused as well on the necessity to decrease existing disparities by not only consolidating information activities in developing countries, but also endowing them with a sustained assistance in the fields of infrastructure and communication capacities.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On another level, our Group has increased its efforts during the 58th session of the General Assembly with a view to defending its strategic interests, and coming up with unified positions on issues of crucial interest to south populations.

As far as issues related to macroeconomics policy, environment or eradication of poverty are concerned, the Group of 77 and China has actively contributed to the adoption of a number of resolutions reflecting the concerns of developing countries, their claims and legitimate aspirations.

We can mention in this context, the General Assembly's reaffirmation of the central role of the United Nations regarding the promotion of development, which must focus on the encouragement of international cooperation for development and the promotion of the coherence of policies concerning international issues linked to development.

In this respect, the General Assembly underlines that the efforts made to reform the international financial architecture must be continued through the effective participation of developing countries, and that the new international financial architecture must be open, equitable, legally founded, predictable and non discriminatory.

Concerning international trade, the General Assembly has reaffirmed the 1st of January 2005 as the ultimate deadline for the conclusion of the negotiations started in 2001 within the framework of the Doha Development Agenda. Accordingly, it is worth underlying that our Group has tied the failure of Cancun to the non-respect of the deadlines set by the Doha Agenda, the absence of progress in agricultural negotiations, and the divergences on the special and differential treatment principle.

Our Group has thus, stressed the necessity to speed up negotiations on agriculture in order to improve market access for products originating from developing countries, and to eliminate all forms of subsidies on agriculture. It has also insisted on the need to reinforce production and exportation capacities of developing countries, and to address issues related to commodities taking into account the work of the UNCTAD and the Group of eminent personalities held in Geneva in September 2003.

With regard to external debt, the positions of our Group were reflected in the relevant resolution of the General Assembly, which mainly stresses the appeal made to industrialized countries to apply- without delay- the reinforced initiative in favor of heavily indebted poor countries, and accept to cancel all bilateral public debt. Within this framework, all creditors, particularly within Paris and London Clubs, are called upon to undertake measures for debt alleviation.

As for the resolution on commodities, it has taken into consideration the claim of our Group to underline the necessity to assist developing countries who are dependent upon those commodities in their efforts aiming at diversifying their exportations, surmounting difficulties linked to supply, reinforcing their institutions and acquiring the know-how and technical skills.

As far as the environment and sustainable development topic is concerned, we can mention mainly the decision which declares 2006 “the international year for deserts and desertification” with the purpose of enhancing the implementation of the United Nations Convention to combat desertification in countries which are seriously affected by drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa.

It is also worth mentioning the resolution related to the follow-up of the implementation of the Program of Action for Development of Small Island Developing States, which stresses the importance of the international meeting to be held in 2004 in Mauritius, and its contribution to decrease risks of vulnerability of those states.

With respect to the U.N reform initiatives undertaken by the Secretary General since 1997, our Group has constructively contributed in the reform process that culminated in the adoption of a resolution under the terms of which the General Assembly has defined the course of action of a strategic planning and of a modern and effective management of our Organization.

With regard to the biennial programme-budget 2004/05, our Group endeavored with determination for the adoption of a substantial budget that allows the Organization to implement all its mandates, especially those of particular importance to the Group.

It should be noted in this context that the adopted budget reveals a substantial increase especially in resources pertinent to development activities.

These are some of the positive results of the efforts made by the Group of 77 and China aiming at making profitable the works of the General Assembly, and guiding them towards the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations major Conferences and Summits hoping to contribute to materializing the Millennium Development Goals.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The situation of LDCs has always taken a prominent place in the priorities of our chairmanship due to their vulnerability and difficult economic and social conditions which prevent them from embarking, resolutely, on the way of economic take off.

In this context and pursuant to the orientations given by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, my country hosted, last June, the Special Ministerial Conference of the Least Developed Countries whose work has been marked by the adoption of the Rabat Declaration through which we have sent a clear and strong message to the international community in order to translate into reality its commitments towards this component of our Group and, particularly, those stated in the Brussels Program of Action.

With the Rabat Declaration, we have, henceforth, a working document reflecting the LDCs major concerns and recommending appropriate measures to materialize the agreed commitments, contribute to poverty eradication and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals as well.

The Rabat Declaration constitutes an example which consecrates the spirit of consultation, solidarity, and mutual assistance which has always prevailed in our Group.

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is in this same spirit that the high-level Conference on South-South Cooperation was held recently in Marrakech

and which has been marked by the Royal Message of His Majesty the King Mohammed VI to the Conference inviting the Group to redouble efforts in order to revitalize South-South cooperation in perspective of the next South Summit to be held in 2005.

Owing to a large and effective participation in the general debate as well as in the round tables, this important event has allowed us to conduct an objective assessment of the progress made in the process of implementing the Havana Plan of Action and to further examine major issues of the strategy to follow in the new context of international economic relations, marked by globalization and interdependence.

As a matter of fact, and as you have noticed, the works of the Conference were crowned with success by the adoption of two important documents namely, the Marrakech Declaration and the Marrakech Framework of Implementation.

We can state, in some respects, that due to new challenges of globalization, the Marrakech Declaration has put an emphasis on the necessity of South-South Cooperation as an inevitable tool to get the required efficiency with a view of achieving the objectives of development and conditions of the emergence of new international relations founded on equity and solidarity.

As it is underlined in the Marrakech Declaration, the economic growth experienced by many developing countries, their enhanced national capacities and their diversified economies could play a major role in advancing South-South Cooperation through the strengthening of regional and sub-regional cooperation. Furthermore, such cooperation could benefit from non-negligible advantages such as market proximity, similarity of modes of production and cultural affinities; this opens large horizons for investment flows among south countries.

For the sake of enhancing further South-South Cooperation, which is complementary to North-South Partnership, the Declaration emphasizes the possibility to promote triangular cooperation mechanisms, which offer the opportunity to use expertise in developing countries and financial assistance granted by developed countries in order to help countries which are in a less developed stage, particularly, LDCs, Land-Locked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

In the same way, through this Declaration, developing countries are aware of the importance that their governments must attach to the emergence of the civil society and the private sector as dynamic actors in the development process and in the genesis of a new system of International Relations able to exercise influence on international cooperation policies and modalities.

Today, and while reaffirming the major role of the North-South Partnership, Developing countries remain convinced by the necessity to elaborate their own analysis and to implement their own policy in order to take up the challenges of the world economy.

It is in this spirit and with a view to giving effect to the Marrakech Declaration, that the high-level Conference has adopted an important second document relating to the implementation framework, which sets off a number of relevant and practical measures, capable of energizing South-South Cooperation.

The adoption of such a document demonstrates the will and the determination of the Group of 77 and China to insufflate a new dynamism to the cooperation among its members by exploiting all possible means, and benefiting from all opportunities offered in the spheres of regional integration, trade and investment, agriculture, food security, water, health, education, information and technology of communication.

Starting from now, we must make the best use of the outcomes of Marrakech Conference in order to better preserve our achievements, enhance further links of cooperation and solidarity among our Group Members and take up challenges imposed by the new context of international relations.

With this end in view, I seize this opportunity to pay a stirring tribute to the brother State of Qatar for its will and displayed determination to contribute to preserving and enhancing solidarity and cohesion of south countries.

On behalf of my country and the Group 77 and China, I wish all success to the brother State of Qatar in its mandate as Chairman of our Group for the year 2004.

Thank you for your attention.

