

Statement by Ambassador Bagher Asadi, Chairman of the Group of 77 (Islamic Republic of Iran), at the Resumed Third Session of the Preparatory Committee of the International Conference on Financing for Development

New York, 15 October 2001

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Co-Chairs,

Whether an exercise of point of order or not, it was a very nice allusion by Ambassador Mubarak of Sudan to the final outcome of the Conference as “baby”. Well, we all love children and I agree with him that we need to give the “baby” a name – a real nice name. Coming from the Fifth Committee, I wanted to inform you and the PrepCom that the Secretary-General while introducing the proposed programme budget for the Biennium 2002-2003, emphasized the importance of the Financing for Development Conference. I thought I should tell you this.

Mr. Chairman,

It is indeed a great pleasure for the Chairman of the Group of 77 to have the opportunity to address the second part of the third session of the Preparatory meeting for the International Conference on Financing for Development. And particularly and more so that we have two distinguished colleagues; two capable, seasoned diplomats; two old hands in this long and interesting process, at the helm. While paying tribute to your distinguished predecessors; Ambassadors Bojer and Jayanama, for their tireless efforts and excellent work along a rather bumpy, winding road, let me seize the moment right here to extend, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China – and myself, of course – our most sincere felicitations to both of you – Ambassadors Jacoby and Ahmad – and assure you of our fullest cooperation for the remainder of this important process.

All of us here are fully aware of the fact that the preparatory process for convening the International Conference on Financing for Development has gone through many long phases - interesting and educational as they have been. For several years all of us in the intergovernmental body at the United Nations have been considering – collectively - procedural as well as substantive aspects and agenda of this conference. We have established partnership with relevant institutional stakeholders; that is, World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Trade Organization, as well as business sectors and civil society, including NGOs, in order to arrive at the broadest possible agenda for the conference and to address national, international and systemic issues relating to financing for development in a holistic manner in the context of globalization and interdependence. The relevant institutions and agencies within the United Nations system, including in particular the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and regional commissions, have been substantively involved in the preparatory process. We appreciate and commend all their assistance and contribution, including for providing technical assistance to developing countries towards preparing them for an informed, effective participation in the intergovernmental process.

Mr. Chairman,

Another important aspect of the preparatory process concerns the substantive input we have had at our disposal. The report of the Secretary-General, as we all know, was prepared by the Coordinating Secretariat and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and in close collaboration with the relevant institutions, particularly the three major institutional stakeholders. It took into account and reflected the perspective, ideas and views of their respective secretariats and staffs - thought- provoking an interesting as they were. The content of the report did remind us, nevertheless, of the necessity of strengthening partnership

with all stakeholders. And more recently, the intergovernmental body has also received the report of the Zedillo Panel. It should be added right here that the preparatory process for the International Conference on Financing for Development has been truly unique in many respects – not only as concerns its duration but also due to its inclusive approach to collaboration and partnership with the widest possible range of stakeholders. The very long, and even tortuous, preparatory process for the Mexico Conference has generated, and quite understandably, very high expectations for its success and final outcome.

Mr. Chairman,

The process for the preparation of the draft outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development has also been quite substantive and rich. As colleagues remember the Group of G77 and China in its statement on the nature of the Conference outcome indicated that the outcome should comprise of a set of principles or objectives and action-oriented initiatives as well as a follow-up mechanism, which, needless to say, should be consistent with the substantive agenda of the Conference. We also stressed that the action-oriented initiatives should contain measures and steps with specific time-table to achieve those objectives and establish a follow-up mechanism for ensuring implementation, monitoring and review of the final outcome of the International Conference.

It should be clear to all of us here that based on the collective decisions we have made in the preparatory process we now have before us the draft outcome. Colleagues hardly need to be reminded of the comprehensive resolution we adopted – of course, by consensus – in our preparatory meeting earlier in February, where, inter alia, governments were asked to submit to the Secretariat a concise identification of possible initiatives or themes as a means of further focusing the substantive preparatory work, within the framework of the substantive agenda of the Conference. In the same resolution, we also asked the distinguished Facilitator, Mr. Mauricio Escanero, also an old hand in the process and a respected, capable colleague, to prepare a working paper, based on the submissions of governments, discussions during the preparatory committee meetings and other inputs, to further focus the discussions of the substantive preparatory work – again, needless to reiterate, within the framework of the substantive agenda of the International Conference. We also decided that during the resumed third session to consider a concise first draft outcome to be prepared by the Facilitator. Further, as we all remember, the Preparatory Committee in its third session in May requested that the Facilitator present the first draft of the outcome document to the Committee in mid- September 2001 for its consideration at the resumed third session in October – which we now have.

Mr. Chairman,

The long process of preparation for this International Conference and its unique characteristics, including as concerns the varied and rich inputs placed on the table by the wide range of the involved stakeholders and partners – to which I referred earlier - have made the preparation of the draft outcome quite a challenge in itself. But, to all fairness, our Dear Colleague Mauricio has indeed risen to the challenge and given the intergovernmental body a good text. Let me state, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, that we acknowledge the tremendous work and energy put into the preparation of the first draft. We have carefully considered this text – and I would like to underline the adjective carefully - and believe that it is a good basis for the beginning of our deliberations and negotiations. We, nevertheless, believe that this first draft of the outcome document could, and in fact, should, be improved through further deliberations in the intergovernmental process in this resumed third session. When the time comes for detailed discussion on the text of the draft and its various sections and chapters, the Group of 77 and China will present specific ideas and proposals, including on the necessity of addition of some new concepts and themes to some paragraphs, improvement of some of the existing ones as well as the deletion of some other concepts or themes as they now exist in the text.

