



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY AMBASSADOR ABDALMAHMOOD ABDALHALEM MOHAMED, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN TO THE UN, AT THE OPENING OF THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (CSD-17) (New York, 4 May 2009)**

Madam Chair,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Allow me once again to congratulate you on your election as the Chairman of the Seventeenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-17) and to thank you for the valuable work done throughout the preparatory process, including the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting (IPM), and for presenting the negotiating text that will guide our discussions during the next two weeks.

This session assumes particular significance and relevance given the current global context of multiple interrelated and mutually reinforcing crises, including the financial crisis, the global food crisis and climate change. Our discussions, and in particular the views of the Group of 77 and China expressed during CSD 16, as well as in the last Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting (IPM), provide good guidance for furthering the implementation of Agenda 21 in the critical interrelated thematic clusters of this cycle: Agriculture, Rural Development, Drought, Desertification, Land, and Africa.

As CSD-17 aims at finding ways and actions to address the challenges identified in the review year with regard to the six themes policy options and recommendations must take into consideration the special needs of developing countries, particularly those in Africa, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

The Group reiterates the importance of taking further effective measures to remove developmental obstacles for people living under foreign occupation, which continue to adversely affect their economic and social development and are incompatible with the dignity and worth of human persons.

The Group also reaffirms the special needs and challenges faced by countries emerging from conflict, and urge the international community and the UN system to address these needs in the areas of financial assistance, technical support and infrastructure development, in order to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

The Group reiterates that consideration of the thematic issues in the agenda of CSD must be undertaken in the context of the three pillars of sustainable development, which include economic development, social development and environmental protection. The three pillars are mutually reinforcing and inter-related and they must be considered in an integrated manner.

CSD 17 is particularly significant in view of their direct impact on our endeavors to eradicate poverty and hunger and address challenges to achieving food security, and the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

Agriculture, rural development, and land management are crucial sectors especially in developing countries. The Group agrees that advancing the implementation of the agricultural development agenda requires renewed commitment and a new vision for global cooperation to implement policies that simultaneously aim at increasing agricultural productivity, creating fair trade regimes, conserving natural resources, and investing in agricultural-related infrastructure.

The Group believes in the need to implement pro-poor policies that strengthen the land rights of the poor and vulnerable groups, including women, whilst ensuring that people use land resources in a sustainable manner

It is essential, to appropriately address the urgency resulting from the food crisis and price volatility, and in this context it is critical to consider, inter alia, the trade and market distortions occurred as a consequence of subsidies applied by developed countries to their agricultural production and exports, the financing capacity, the role of indigenous people, and the establishment of conducive economic and market environments.

The Group believes that the CSD must urge developed countries to eliminate without delay subsidies to agricultural production and to improve access to the markets of developing countries. The Commission must also address the issue of access to, the development, acquisition, transfer and diffusion of new and appropriate technologies, particularly environmentally sound technologies and corresponding know-how to developing countries, in order to increase productivity and competitiveness.

Desertification, drought and land degradation continue to pose serious threats to developing countries and obstruct efforts at revitalizing the agricultural sector. These are severe problems with social and economic implications, and they aggravate the problems of poverty and hunger as well as the over exploitation of natural resources.

The Group believes that through international mechanisms such as the UNCCD and GEF, the international community should intensify its support to developing countries in the areas of sustainable management of lands, development of agriculture, addressing drought and combating desertification and land degradation. We believe that the CSD should recognize the role of technology transfer in promoting sustainable land management, as well as the importance of it in the area drought.

In this regard, the Group calls for substantial increase and allocation of additional predictable financial resources and investment for agriculture, sustainable management of lands, rural development, combating desertification and land degradation.

The Group looks forward to UNCCD COP 9 later this year, and the decisions it will take, particularly pertaining to the 10 year strategic plan to enhance the implementation of the Convention. The Group attaches particular importance to the Strategic Plan's four objectives, which it considers a basis for concerted global action.

The African continent faces big challenges regarding the thematic issues of CSD 17. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the international community committed itself to support Africa in meeting the mounting challenges it faces under the current global environment.

International commitments to Africa must be met in the areas of trade, technology transfer, ODA, debt relief. NEPAD is the primary implementing vehicle for the engagement of the international community in support of Africa's development. The international community must step up its efforts to support the continent's effort in reducing poverty and hunger and addressing the current food crisis, particularly in reviving the agriculture sector, which is key to addressing the food crisis in the continent.

The downward trends in ODA and capital flows, including FDI, and systemic imbalances in the international financial system, including the institutional architecture, must be urgently addressed. The commitment of developed countries to allocate 0.07 per cent of their GDP to developing countries in the framework of ODA must be met.

Madam Chair,

The need for a fully supportive and enabling international environment to facilitate and promote the implementation of national development strategies by developing countries is critical even as the world faces widespread economic contraction.

It must be reiterated that the challenges developing countries face go beyond the issues of political commitment, to that of our lack of capacity, inadequate resources including financial, human and technical; crippling impact of external debt; unfair trade, all of which impede our development efforts. Due to all these impediments, it is not within the capacity of developing countries to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, without a supportive and enabling international environment. For this reason, strategies to reverse the current global economic downturn should also take into consideration measures to ensure a supportive international environment for sustainable development, with special focus on the themes for CSD-17.

Madam Chair,

We attach great importance to the role of the Commission on Sustainable Development, which should continue to provide guidance and coordination on issues related to the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, and more importantly the means of their implementation.

In conclusion, the G77 and China approaches these negotiations with a constructive spirit, and hopes that CSD 17 will reach a set of action-based, time bound and development oriented policy options including mechanisms for their follow up and implementation, that really can be translated into action to help us in finding sustainable solutions to the development challenges that we continue to face in an international environment that is becoming increasingly unfriendly and exacerbated by the current economic recession and complex financial crises.

I thank you.