



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. WAHEED AL-SHAMI, SECOND SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 117: FOLLOW-UP TO THE OUTCOME OF THE MILLENNIUM SUMMIT, IN THE PLENARY OF THE 65TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 23 November 2010)

Mr. President,

The Group of 77 and China is pleased to participate in this morning's joint debate under agenda item 117: Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit.

The Group of 77 and China places a high priority on global public health and the achievement of the health-related Millennium Development Goals. We welcome the significant achievements made in some areas but also note that not enough progress has been achieved in the health-related goals, as was evident in the MDG review held in September last. Factors such as poverty, coupled with the effects of the global food, financial and economic crises have severely hampered the efforts of developing countries in implementing the internationally agreed-development goals and commitments, including the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. President,

Health and poverty are interlinked and are central to sustainable development, as recognized in the Ministerial Declaration of the 2009 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council. The emergence of non-communicable diseases, which is growing faster in poor countries, highlights the inter-linkages between health and poverty and its impact on socio-economic development. Thus, the Group of 77 and China will focus its intervention on the issue of non-communicable diseases, one of the major challenges for development in the twenty-first century.

The Group of 77 and China thanks the Secretary-General for transmission of the report of the Director-General of the World Health Organization on the global status of non-communicable diseases, with a particular focus on the development challenges faced by developing countries contained in document A/65/362. We note all relevant resolutions and decisions adopted by the World Health Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases. The Group of 77 and China supports the call for continued implementation of the 2008 - 2013 Action Plan for the Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases, the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. We also recognize the role of the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions, the private sector and civil society in the promotion of public health at all levels.

Mr. President,

The General Assembly's unanimous adoption on 13 May 2010 of resolution 64/265 on the "Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases", which was submitted under this agenda item (Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit), clearly underscores the need for concerted action and coordinated responses to this issue. As the report of the Director-General of WHO details, non-communicable diseases affect countries in every region of the world from the Americas, eastern Mediterranean, Europe, South-East Asia to the Western Pacific. While we take

note of the various national and regional initiatives undertaken on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, the statistics are daunting and paint a clear picture of the enormous human suffering and financial toll these diseases are exacting on our populations, particularly from a gender perspective as "women and girls are disproportionately affected by the increase in non-communicable diseases." This fact was noted by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "Review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly and its contribution to shaping a gender perspective towards the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals" [document E/CN.6/2010/2].

Mr. President,

Non-communicable diseases (mainly cardiovascular disease, strokes, cancers, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases) account for an estimated 35 million deaths every year, including premature death of an estimated 8 million people before the age of 60 years. Over 90 per cent of these premature deaths occur in developing countries, in particular among the poorest and most disadvantaged population. The World Health Organization predicts that, by 2015, non-communicable diseases will increase by 19 per cent and contribute significantly to factors such as, among others, increased loss of productivity, slow economic growth, rapid rise in healthcare costs, overwhelming national health systems and unprecedented levels of poverty if we, the international community, do not take immediate and concerted actions at the national, regional and global levels to address the developmental challenges posed by this growing epidemic. In the African region alone, deaths from non-communicable diseases are predicted to increase by more than 20 per cent by 2015 while in South-East Asia and Western Pacific, non-communicable diseases account for an estimated 54 per cent of the 14.7 million annual deaths and over 75 per cent of deaths, respectively.

Given the socio-economic impact of non-communicable diseases and its link to health and poverty, the Group of 77 and China cannot sufficiently underscore the importance of strengthening international cooperation in the area of public health. We also urge developed countries, in accordance with their commitments, to meet the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for Official Development Assistance to enable developing countries, particularly low- and middle-income countries, to meet their internationally agreed development goals. In the case of global public health, the urgent need for increased and sustained levels of assistance to, among others, build capacity of public health systems; to improve access to affordable, safe, effective and high-quality medicines; to train, recruit and retain skilled public health personnel; and to develop necessary infrastructure and transfer of technology is essential if we are to tackle the growing threat of non-communicable diseases. The Group of 77 and China supports the call, in the report of the Director-General of the World Health Organization before us, for global development initiatives to consider the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases as one of the priorities to be included as an integral part of the global development agenda, including through poverty reduction initiatives.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China was pleased to join consensus on resolution A/64/265 and its call for a high-level meeting of the General Assembly, with the participation of Heads of State and Government, to be convened in September 2011 to address non-communicable diseases and its socio-economic impact. We welcome the appointment of the Permanent Representatives of Jamaica and Luxembourg as co-facilitators of the informal consultations, which are currently underway, on the scope, modalities, format and organization of the high-level meeting

of the General Assembly to be convened in September 2011. The Group of 77 and China is participating actively in the consultations and looks forward to the adoption of a resolution that reflects the views of all member States, and which will result in a satisfactory, targeted and action-oriented outcome of the process, given the enormity of the crisis facing us.

Thank you.

