

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DAUDI N. MWAKAWAGO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, BEFORE UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF U.S.A., NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA, WASHINGTON, D.C.

7 May 1997

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Mr. President,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should like to cordially thank the United Nations Association of the USA, National Capital Area, for organizing this important meeting and inviting me to address this topic dealing with issues relating to environment and sustainable development following the just concluded preparatory meeting held in New York.

As you are all aware, the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGASS) to review UNCED, five years after Rio, will take place in New York, from 23-27 June 1997. In preparation for UNGASS, the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) convened from 24 February - 7 March 1997 for the initial preparation of the UNGASS.

The CSD preparatory session has just been concluded. There is now a negotiated text on all the important aspects relevant for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21 for discussion by the Heads of State and Government at the UNGASS. However, the text prepared for UNGASS has brackets in a number of areas where it was not possible to reach a consensus at this stage. It is, therefore, hoped that delegations will conduct informal negotiations between now and June, in order to resolve the outstanding issues, including the difficult issues of resource and technology transfer, which are the main stumbling blocks in the cross-cutting themes.

The CSD noted in the assessment of progress made since UNCED that, the period had been characterized by the accelerated globalization by interactions among countries in the areas of world trade, foreign direct investments and capital markets. It is therefore important that the impact of globalization should be taken fully into account when formulating national and international environmental and social policies in order to ensure that globalization trends are compatible with the objective of sustainable development. In this regard, it is necessary that greater attention should be paid to sensitize the private sector to the requirements and imperatives of the linkage between the environment and development.

On the issue of poverty, there is a clear consensus among both developed and developing countries, that the eradication of poverty is essential for sustainable development. Poverty thus remains an overriding theme of sustainable development for many years to come. Eradication of poverty depends on the full integration of people living in poverty into economic, social and political life. In particular, enhancing the productive capacity of poor people increases their well-being. Furthermore, in order to achieve that there must be policy changes, in particular provision of social services and food security, inter alia, that will effect such integration and social empowerment. In view of the fact that the number of poor people has increased since Rio, there is an urgent need for the timely and full implementation of all the relevant commitments, agreements and targets already agreed by the international community including especially the 20/20 initiative, as contained in the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. As is well known it takes two to tango. There can be no meaningful changes for the greater majority of the people without positive intervention by the governments of the North.

The issues relating to the means of implementation are controversial, particularly the question of provision of

adequate, new and additional resources as well as transfer of environmentally-sound technologies (ESTs) for environmental programmes, projects and other mitigation measures, particularly in the developing countries. During the negotiations, the G-77 urged the developed countries to meet all their financial commitments of Agenda 21, especially those related to the provision of new and additional resources that are both adequate and predictable, to developing countries.

In these negotiations the developed countries tried to argue that ODA transfer which was agreed at Rio as one of the main means to transfer resources to developing countries, was no longer crucial since more resources were being transferred to the South through FDI flows. However, this argument is partially true because a large portion of the private financial flows are only going to a dozen countries that are already growing fast, and very little, or none at all, of the FDI flows are going to Africa and the LDCs which need these resources the most. Furthermore, FDI flows are commercial in nature, and hence cannot be relied for financing sustainable development or building basic infrastructure needed especially in the LDCs.

The argument that ODA (Official Development Assistance) could play a catalytic role in leveraging FDI for sustainable development is also flawed mainly because it is difficult to ascertain direct linkage between FDI and ODA. FDI is private capital voluntarily invested by companies or financial institutions, whereas ODA is mainly given as untied grant on government-to-government basis for development purposes. As long as donors argue that they do not control FDI flows, it will be difficult to assure that such flows are directly related to ODA. It is also not proper to attach strings such as environmental conditionality to ODA. Furthermore, reliance on "green credit lines" as a major source of funding for environment related project as advocated by some donors is impractical in view of the fact that very few initiatives of this kind exist.

In this context, in view of the fact that ODA flows have dwindled from 0.34 in 1992 to a low mark of about 0.25 presently, the G-77 is urging the developed countries to stop the slide and increase ODA flows to the agreed target of 0.7% by the year 2000. Although the developed countries have shown some inclination to increase their ODA contributions, they argued that putting a specific target to achieve the objective was inappropriate for now.

Concerning the financial mechanisms, it is regretted that donors did not make new commitments beyond that for the replenishment of the GEF. The G-77 stressed that GEF funding should be increased so as to provide adequate, new and additional resources in enhancement of the projects and activities that are directed at achieving global environmental benefits.

The reluctance on the part of donors to provide adequate resources for environmental projects was further confirmed by the developed countries position, stressing that financing for the implementation of Agenda 21, should come from countries own public and private sectors. This is a clear negation of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities which is the basis of international co-operation and partnership for the implementation of Agenda 21. Hence the G-77 will further press for a balance between domestic and international responsibility, in which the international community should continue providing adequate resources and technology transfer, in support of the efforts which the developing countries are making to implement Agenda 21.

In addition to this, developing countries require an enabling international economic climate which is conducive to increased production of goods and services and have access to developed countries' markets. This requires inter alia, increasing investment flows and improvement of terms of trade including offering remunerative prices for commodities. It is also necessary to address broader structural economic issues such as debt, technology transfer etc. Concerning debt, more measures need to be taken to resolve the external debt problem, especially in Africa and other LDCs. In particular debt serving and debt stock should be drastically reduced and debt cancellation measures should be taken, especially with respect to LDCs.

As far as the issue of technology transfer is concerned, the CSD prepcom for UNGASS stressed that availability of scientific and technological information and access to and transfer of environmentally sound technology are essential requirements for sustainable development, particularly in the developing countries. In this regard, the international community should promote, facilitate and finance, the access to and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, in particular to developing countries, on favorable terms, including concessional and preferential terms. This entails, capacity building including the development of human resources, R& D institutions with capacity to adapt, absorb and diffuse technologies, as well as to generate technical know-how and innovation.

The G-77 underlined that since technology transfer to developing countries cannot be confined to market forces alone, there is a need to promote public R&D institutions which could encourage technology transfer to the developing countries, on concessional terms. The creation of centres for transfer of technology at regional levels, could also greatly contribute to achieving the objective of transfer of EST to developing countries. It is hoped that developed countries will support, financially and through technical cooperation, the efforts of developing countries in this area of capacity building for technology transfer and development.

In the sectors area the G-77 strongly supported inter alia the issues of freshwater, desertification and drought, biodiversity and natural disasters. The Group also tried to secure its interests in other sectoral issues such as oceans and seas, energy, atmosphere, toxic, hazardous, and radioactive wastes and sustainable tourism.

On freshwater, the G-77 supported the proposal to initiate a dialogue under the aegis of the CSD, beginning at its sixth session, aimed at building a consensus on the necessary actions and in particular on the means of implementation, in order to consider initiating a strategic approach for the implementation of all aspects of sustainable use of freshwater for social and economic purpose, including, inter alia, safe drinking water, for sanitation, water for irrigation, waste water management etc. We underlined that this intergovernmental process will only succeed if there is proven commitment by the international community for the provision of new and additional resources for the goals of this initiative.

The G-77 would be prepared to consider a similar process in the energy sector, if developed countries and the international community would be prepared to undertake commitment to provide new and additional resources for initiatives aimed at improvement of energy efficiency and development of new and renewable sources of energy such as biomass, HEP, solar energy etc., particularly in the developing countries. At present, the developed countries have shown reluctance to accept commitment related to the provision of resources and technology transfer to developing countries, to this effect, and hence there is stalemate in the adoption of this initiative.

It is also regretted that our negotiating partners bracketed the paragraphs dealing with desertification and drought, particularly where there are references to the establishment of global mechanism that would ensure the provision of new and additional resources for the implementation of the Convention. They showed no enthusiasm for the transfer of ESTs to developing countries to combat desertification and drought.

The G-77 intends to press for this issue of desertification and drought which mostly affects Africa and other developing countries, in the coming negotiations aimed at removing the brackets from the unresolved issues.

Regarding forests, the G-77 made very constructive suggestions calling for the establishment of an ad hoc open-ended intergovernmental forum on Forests under the aegis of UNCED charged with promoting and facilitating the implementation of the Panel's proposals for action and consideration of matters left pending by the IPF, notably, trade in forest products and services and the environment, transfer of technology and the need for financial resource, as well as to consider the possibility and need for a legally binding instrument. This forum, if established, should report the results of its work to the CSD in 1999.

The outcome of the CSD-5 preparatory negotiations for UNGASS was generally good. Some people had expected to see a text without brackets or only a few brackets. Hence from this point of view, the appearance of a text bracketed in a number of controversial paragraphs, is seen as modest success of the negotiations. However, the brackets are very significant expressions of the difficulties which could not be resolved, particularly in the difficult issues relating to commitment on targets, resources, technology transfer, emissions reductions, to mention only a few. Countries will need to consult intensively during the intersessional period between now and June so that the outstanding issues could be resolved before UNGASS begins. I am optimistic that these issues could be resolved, in order to present our Heads of State and Government, who are coming for UNGASS, with a good document, which they could endorse as a basis for environment and development actions in the post UNGASS period. The resolve to face the environmental challenges is there; what is lacking is the necessary political will to proceed. We hope our Heads of State and Government will take the political decisions needed to give impetus to the implementation of Agenda 21.

In conclusion, let me state quite categorically the negotiations were tough and at times quite frustrating. It is in the nature of the business of negotiations that there would be a spirit of give and take. But when all is said and done there is the reality of growing poverty and inequality to be addressed. An opportunity is coming. Let's hope it will not be allowed to pass without concrete actions. The UNSA can make its contribution to this debate.

Thank you.