

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR. DAUDI N. MWAKAWAGO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF THE UNDP/UNFPA EXECUTIVE BOARD

New York, March 10, 1997

Mr. Chairman,

I am greatly pleased to be accorded this opportunity to submit the views and perspective of the Group of 77 and China at this Executive Board meeting which will basically be deliberating on the medium-term development frameworks at country and regional levels.

Mr. Chairman,

This meeting offers a golden opportunity to countries individually and collectively to exchange ideas on the best approaches of accelerating economic growth and development of developing countries. It is our sincere hope that this meeting will seriously take on board many of the salient elements of the orientation of our Group to make development more effective and meaningful.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China recognize the efforts of the UNDP and UNFPA in assisting developing countries to design more innovative approaches which will engender effectiveness and efficiency in the implementation of their development programmes and projects. Indeed, the country and regional cooperation frameworks before this meeting reflect those endeavours.

We also note with encouragement that regional cooperation frameworks presented before this Board have signals of improvement towards more integrated and effective approach in complementing and supplementing national development efforts. The inputs and suggestions from countries and institutions of regions are really useful in designing a credible and feasible regional programme.

The Group of 77 and China, fully supports these trends in improvement in the country and regional programming of development. It is thus, our expectation that the Board will endorse the country and the two regional cooperation frameworks - of Africa and Asia. These frameworks are but the beginning of a new regime in designing cooperation modalities which would be more durable and realistic.

Mr. Chairman,

Prioritization remains a sticky issue mainly because the requirements of meeting even the basic human needs of many developing countries are overwhelming. Both country and regional cooperation frameworks have not succeeded to come up with priority of priorities. Implementation of development programmes is still very problematic to many countries.

The main stumbling block in operationalizing and implementing country and regional programmes remains that of lack of resources, in particular, technical and financial resources. In this regard, we have witnessed drastic cuts in funds in agreed programmes and thus leaving them unimplemented. For instance, while the total programmed resources for the first Regional Cooperation Framework for Africa are set at US\$300 million for 1997-2001, to date only \$91 million have been made available! We thus call upon the donor and international community to make more efforts in providing the needed resources for the TCDC programmes. If these resources are not made available, the objectives of the regional framework shall not be attained.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like now to focus on the overriding importance that the Group of 77 and China attach to TCDC in the context of South-South Cooperation in general both as a strategy in support of the development efforts of the developing countries and as a means of ensuring their effective participation in the emerging global economy. I believe that South-South cooperation is important in ensuring that the countries of the South intensify cooperation among themselves in those areas they have a comparative advantage.

In this regard, I wish to restate the commitment and resolve expressed by the 20th Ministerial Meeting of the Group 77 held last September in New York. The final Ministerial Declaration stated strongly the firm commitment of the developing countries to make TCDC and South-South Cooperation an important cornerstone of the overall economic philosophy of the Group of 77 and to promote this concept in the future as an increasingly strategic dimension of international development cooperation. We intend to pursue this objective in the context of the policy discussion that will take place in the forthcoming tenth session of the High Level Committee to be held in May and during the debate on operational activities that will take place during the substantive session of ECOSOC for 1997 and the 52nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

We recognize the tremendous potential of South-South cooperation in tapping the vast resources and experiences available in the developing world. This does not mean, however, that South-South cooperation should be seen as a substitute for North-South cooperation. As an integral part of international development cooperation and a catalyst for promoting international economic growth and development, South-South cooperation should thus complement North-South cooperation.

I wish to remind members of the Executive Board that South-South cooperation constitutes an important cornerstone of the economic philosophy of the developing countries and that the Buenos Aires Plan of Action which was adopted in 1978 by a United Nations sponsored Conference and the work being done by the South Centre under the leadership of the former President of Tanzania, H.E. Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere continue to provide a solid conceptual basis and operational framework for guiding action in this field.

Mr. Chairman,

TCDC is an important vehicle through which the objectives of South-South cooperation could be pursued. At its ninth session held in May/June 1995, the High Level Committee on the Review of TCDC adopted the recommendations contained in the New Directions report which outlined a series of measures for ensuring that TCDC serve as a dynamic instrument in the service of development, by adopting a strategic orientation and focusing on a number of high priority issues such as trade and investment, macroeconomic policy and management, production and employment, poverty eradication and the environment which are likely to have a major impact on a wide range of developing countries. It is significant that these recommendations were unequivocally endorsed by the UNDP Executive Board and by ECOSOC and the UN General Assembly.

At the United Nations institutional level, there is a need for a co-ordination of the ECDC process and the TCDC work in New York. While ECDC elaborates on the broad policy issues, TCDC translates them into concrete programmes at country levels.

Mr. Chairman,

It should also be noted that the recent San Jose, Costa Rica, Conference on Trade, Finance and Investment as well as the Sectoral Meetings on Food and Agriculture and Energy adopted a series of measures designed to promote an intensified pattern of economic cooperation among developing countries. We, therefore, look to the Special Unit for TCDC and other parts of the UN development system as well as donor community in helping to advance these objectives. Let me also say that we are grateful to the Government of Japan for its continued support in this regard and for the generous contribution it has so far made to this effort. It is hoped that other donors will emulate this example.

We were of course very pleased that the Executive Board agreed in 1996 to make a special allocation for TCDC which we feel recognizes the increasing importance of this form of cooperation. Let me, at this juncture, reiterate the importance of maintaining a separate conceptual and pragmatic framework for the promotion of TCDC and South-South Cooperation in general in order to enable the UN system to respond to a consistent set of goals and objectives and also to provide a catalyst to correct the North-South bias in traditional multilateral development cooperation.

In this context, we would like to express our full support for the 1997 TCDC Cooperation Framework which we feel will enable the Special Unit for TCDC as a separate entity within UNDP to promote the objectives of the strategy outlined in the report on New Directions for TCDC, which, as it were, provides a philosophical compass for the implementation of TCDC.

Apart from urging the donor community to provide adequate funding for TCDC programmes, we also urge governments and financial institutions to respond positively to the request for contributions to the Trust Fund on South-South Cooperation which has been established by UNDP in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 50/119.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to conclude my remarks by stressing the following aspects:

- Strengthening TCDC as an important instrument for implementing country-based programmes in the developing countries is essential. Any attempts to reduce TCDC's current mandate and structure will weaken rather than strengthen TCDC.
- The realisation of TCDC objectives requires the provision of an adequate level of resources by the donor community. The Board should thus seriously discuss the issue of substantive funding for TCDC activities.

I thank you.