

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. J.M. KIKWETE, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, AT THE FORMAL
HANDING OVER OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE GROUP OF 77 FROM COSTA RICA TO THE
UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

New York, 20 January 1997

Mr. Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Costa Rica,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I wish you all a happy new year and sincerely hope that 1997 will prove successful and a fruitful year for the Group of 77.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and to congratulate him on behalf of the Group of 77 for his unanimous election to lead the United Nations into the twenty-first century. I am very pleased to convey on your behalf our pledge of cooperation and support. Tanzania and the Group of 77 will cooperate with you and support you in your difficult task.

I wish also to acknowledge the presence of Dr. Fernando Naranjo, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica, and Mr. Gustave Speth, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme. We deeply appreciate their participation on this solemn occasion.

At this point, I would like to pay special tribute to the Government and people of Costa Rica for firstly agreeing to shoulder the responsibility, and secondly for allowing their Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Ambassador Fernando Berrocal-Soto, for leading the G-77 in 1996 and for the achievements made under Costa Rica's Chairmanship. Tanzania hopes to build on that solid foundation to advance the common interests of the developing countries in 1997.

Today, I should like to renew to you the expression of our gratitude for the confidence deposited in us and I would like also to assure you that Tanzania will spare no efforts in responding to the needs of all of our countries linked by many aspirations and common interests and whose very diversity and multiple potentials are considerable assets in our joint enterprise. By working together in solidarity, we must strive to ensure the accomplishment of objectives which united our countries over three decades ago. The United Republic of Tanzania fully understands the meaning and scope of this display of confidence as well as the distinction bestowed upon my country in assuming the leadership of the Group of 77 for the year 1997. We are fully committed to discharge this high office with as much distinction as our predecessors.

Tanzania acknowledges the fact that to chair the Group of 77 at the United Nations we are aware of the importance of the responsibility linked to this prestigious as well as heavy mission. Ambassador Daudi Mwakawago and his colleagues in the Mission along with the staff of G-77 office, will attempt to serve the Group to the best of their abilities. This difficult but lofty task will fall within our faithful following of the guidelines of foreign policy for Tanzania as a Third World country.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1997 offers rather dampening perspectives in the world economy. In the countries of the South there will be a

continuance of an appreciable level of growth. But globally the forecasts are far from being satisfactory and the economic situation for many countries in particular in Africa remains precarious.

Hence, the perspectives for improved access to the markets of developed countries for manufactured exports from developing countries remain uncertain. The demand for raw materials and commodities has dropped and the weight of external debt remains unbearable to a great number of countries of the South. If we add to that picture instability and conflict and unprecedented growth in the flows of refugees and displaced persons and the spread of absolute poverty, it is clear that the challenges facing our countries today, challenges which we are attempting to meet here within the United Nations still remain and become increasingly complex.

International economic relations are most definitely power relations. It is not easy that the countries which exert control in the prevailing international system accept reforms aimed at correcting the prevailing economic and institutional inequalities. Only the determined joint action by the countries of the South, based on clear development policies, a better utilization of their resources and capabilities and a solid strategy of economic cooperation, may offer possibilities for changing the current international economic system.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In its thirty-three years of existence, the Group of 77 has struggled to defend the interests of its member countries. There have been significant successes and many setbacks. It is incumbent upon all of us to consolidate the gains while tackling the shortcomings and setbacks with concerted action. Our main duty is to build and preserve the unity of the developing countries and to accommodate its different concerns and aspirations without jeopardizing the basic objectives and principles of the Group as stated in the Charter of Algiers adopted by the First Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77 held in October 1967. The strength of the Group must rest on the clarity of its objectives, the effectiveness of its mechanisms, its unity and its internal cohesion. Only in that way will it be more real and less formal. The Group of 77 has an enormous potential for making use of its influence. Therefore, our duty is to persevere in the efforts to achieve its effective consolidation.

With the support of the Group, we also intend to explore actively and in cooperation with the Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement, the possibilities of resuming true dialogue among developed and developing countries. This dialogue should be based on interdependence, mutual interest and partnership. The Joint Coordinating Committee between the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 (JCC), I hope, will play a key role on this issue.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The remainder of the present decade will be decisive for the Third World. The Agenda for Development, the reform of the UN system, the UN financial crisis and the follow-up of the UN major conferences and summits and other related issues dealing with cooperation, growth and the development of our countries will define, in one way or another, the course of relations with the developed countries for the twenty-first century. My country, Tanzania, is fully committed to working closely with friends and allies to restoring the issue of development to the core of the UN agenda. I believe strongly that for peace and justice to be realized, there must be genuine development in the South.

I further would like to assure you that I will give the greatest priority to South-South cooperation. The results

of the meeting of the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee held in Manila in February 1996, the results of which were endorsed by our Ministers, are and do provide in this field clear and pragmatic directives for South-South cooperation. Among other measures, Tanzania working along with all of you, is determined to implement decisions reached by Sectoral Meetings held in Georgetown, Jakarta and the recently held conference in San Jose. I take this opportunity to commend the Government of Costa Rica for hosting the South-South Conference on Trade, Investment and Finance and for leading it to its successful conclusion. The conference was truly an occasion for developing countries to reaffirm their solidarity and advance common position on relevant issues related to trade, investment and finance within the framework of the Caracas Programme of Action.

I intend also to undertake work aimed at the full implementation of the Caracas Programme of Action so that it can deal fully with the realities of today and of tomorrow. I intend also to launch consultations for adequate preparation of the tenth session of the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee (IFCC-X) to be held in late 1997/early 1998 in Africa in accordance with the principle of geographical rotation.

I am convinced that the IFCC-X meeting certainly would have to deal with the progress made by the Group in the field of Economic and Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, but also and above all, it would have to look with foresight towards the content and the deployment of our future actions. I am encouraged by the preliminary exchange of views that have been held on certain issues among some of our Ministers last September, and I hope that I will be able to hold further consultations over the next few months.

I also intend with your support and assistance to develop closer relations with the United Nations system and with the South Centre in order to mobilize all available resources and skills in order to further and strengthen South-South cooperation.

At this point I cannot conclude without mentioning the supporting mechanisms made available to the Chairman of the Group of 77 in New York. Here again I count on the cooperation of delegations to provide full support for the core of assistants for the Chairman and to contribute financially to the ECDC account.

Similarly, cooperation and coordination with the various Chapters of the G-77 will be for us a concern at all times so that we can promote further and make fruitful the efforts of the developing countries at various United Nations centres.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Group should articulate a global strategy that may enable it to respond adequately to changes that take place in the world scene and which may translate into true negotiating capacity. Otherwise we will progressively continue to be marginalized from the real world and our influence on the latter will continue to be virtually non-existent. A key component of this strategy should be the review of the functioning of the Chapters of the Group of 77. Up to now the latter have acted in a dislocated manner and without clear goals, which is reflected in the weakness of their positions and in their lack of continuity and dynamism. The disadvantage of the developing countries ultimately resides in the lack of a firm political platform for the 21st century. This is an issue which should be discussed in depth by the next ministerial meeting of G-77.

In continuing the action of our Group and in strengthening our tradition, the Tanzanian Chairmanship is determined to guide its efforts towards promoting constructive and pragmatic dialogue, working towards true renewed international cooperation for development.

In this task, which will be a major challenge in this era, the Chairman, strengthened with your support and your cooperation will devote himself resolutely to putting an end to the marginalization of the developing world and he will attempt to stimulate good will within the developed world for our legitimate quest for an international order of progress equally shared by all.

Lastly but not least, Tanzania would like to express very sincere appreciation to the United Nations, UNDP and in particular to its Special Unit for TCDC, for practical assistance provided the Office of the Chairman. Such assistance is critical to the efficiency and effectiveness of the Group of 77.

Thank you very much.