

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 AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE CHAPTERS MEETING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE TWENTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE CHAIRMEN/COORDINATORS OF THE G-77 CHAPTERS

Geneva, 4 July 1997

Excellencies,
Distinguished Chairmen/Coordinators of the Chapters,
Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Mr. Administrator of UNDP,
Mr. Secretary-General of UNCTAD,
Distinguished Members of the Group of 77,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to welcome Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

I have the distinct honour and privilege to address this Plenary Meeting of the Group of 77 on the occasion of the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Chairmen/Coordinators of the Group of 77. In my capacity as the Chairman of the Group of 77 in New York, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Chairmen/Coordinators of the Group of 77 in the various chapters for their positive response to attend this meeting. Their presence is a testimony of their commitment to strengthen the capacity of action of our Group.

I wish to record my gratitude to the Geneva Chapter and UNCTAD for the excellent arrangements made for the hosting of this meeting. My sincere thanks goes especially to H.E. Ambassador Munir Akram of Pakistan, Chairman of Geneva Chapter.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As is customary at this gathering of the developing countries, we shall not only engage in assessing global economic situation of the world, but also endeavour to forge common approaches and coordinate our respective positions in the field of economic and social development. The profound and rapid changes which are transforming the world compel us to constantly enhance our solidarity and unity in pursuing our collective goals for development and peace.

It is true that a few developing countries have managed to make significant progress despite the adverse global economic environment. Many, however, remain caught in the grip of economic stagnation and decline and trapped in poverty and structural under-development. African countries and LDCs in particular continue to be confronted by acute reversals and thus deserve our special attention.

Clearly much needs to be done. The challenges are many and quite formidable. But the changing configurations in the global political and economic landscape offers renewed hope and promise for facing the new realities. Thus, in our ever more integrated and interdependent world, in which problems and issues are increasingly global in nature, their resolution cannot be achieved through piecemeal approach or on an ad hoc basis. Rather, such problems, imbalances and inequities should be addressed comprehensively and globally.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Group of 77 attaches high political importance to the revitalization and strengthening of the role of the United Nations in promoting international cooperation for economic and social development. The Group of 77 strongly believes that the United Nations should be allowed to develop its full potential in the field of international economic cooperation and should address urgently the serious economic and social problems facing developing countries, particularly Africa and the LDCs. To that end, the realization of the right to development as a basic human right should be given utmost priority by the United Nations and the international community at large.

We fully support the streamlining and the strengthening of the UN system. In this regard it is our hope that the Bretton Woods Institutions will also be reformed to allow for greater democracy, universality and transparency in the decision-making processes.

The process of reform underway in the UN should be approached with the objective of strengthening the role of the Organization as the only worldwide institution with the capacity to effectively address various development issues of international concern.

We must strengthen the UN's ability to fulfil its role and functions in the development field, and the General Assembly must provide the leadership to ensure the fulfillment of the noble visions of the UN founders. The mandate of the United Nations in development must be fully exercised. In this regard, we need to restore the core economic growth issues to the top of the United Nations agenda. The Group of 77 is fully committed to reforming the UN system in a manner that would enable it to address fully the real concerns of developing countries.

Reforms must be determined by policy objectives and not vice-versa. The UN's galaxy of organization must operate as an integrated system within the framework of agreed policies by member States. Moreover, unless accompanied by sufficient resources, no amount of institutional reform can strengthen the UN's role in development. The bodies, organs and agencies of the UN system must be provided with the necessary resources in order to enable them to fulfill their respective mandates.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The downsizing of the Secretariat is important to march with the time. However this should not proceed in accordance with reduction criteria of purely mathematical nature. What is important is that the departments of the Secretariat are able to satisfactorily carry out the programs that the Governments have entrusted them to perform, and that the number and quality of the staff of the United Nations could best serve the tasks of the Organization and the needs of the member States. One important consideration to the Group of 77 is the adherence to the principle of equitable geographical representation.

The Group of 77 considers that the current financial crisis of the Organization is the consequence of the non-payment of substantial arrears and overdue contributions by some member States. Viable solutions to the financial situation can emerge only when member States pledge to pay their contributions promptly, in full and without conditions in accordance with Article 17 of the Charter, and take concrete actions to clear their arrears within a reasonable and defined time-frame and without any conditionalities.

It is to be recalled that the Group of 77, which is collectively among the largest contributors to the peace-keeping efforts of the United Nations through the provision of troops and equipment, has in effect been

financing the delays in payment by some major contributors of their assessed contributions. The Group of 77 is committed to contribute constructively to the ongoing discussions on the financial crisis confronting the United Nations.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The issue of the implementation of the commitments and agreements of summits and international conferences is a priority and an essential aspect of our work in 1997 and the future. The cycle of conferences since 1990 demonstrated - once again - the capacity of the United Nations and the extraordinary value and amount of human and intellectual resources that is possible to mobilize around the key issues of the time.

The conferences addressed the critical issue of the development of humankind on the one hand and the centrality of liberating the person from all the shackles of underdevelopment on the other. All the conferences adopted programmes and platforms of action in which a detailed division of labour was underwritten for all the players. Therefore, in analysing the implementation of the decisions it is important to bear in mind the different roles played by governments, agencies and civil society. Such recognition will provide clarity in apportioning praise or blame. On balance, however, it can be stated without contradiction that the majority of the member countries in the Group of 77 were faithful implementers of the major decisions of the conferences. To some this assessment may be controversial. But the plain truth is that all the studies by leading authorities are in agreement that the South fulfilled its side of the bargain. For global partnership to be meaningful there must be a new attitude and commitments to cooperate both in words and action.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The role of the United Nations in the field of South-South cooperation is vital. In this context, United Nations institutions and specialized agencies located at the Group of 77 chapters should play a more active role in the task of promoting and supporting ECDC/TCDC. In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of 77, I am committed to make every effort to involve the UN system in the cooperative activities of developing countries.

Economic and technical cooperation among developing countries represent today an urgent need that is becoming more imperative than ever. The holding of sectoral meetings constitute also an instrument of great importance for the revitalization of South-South cooperation.

We in the Group of 77 wish to reiterate our strong commitment to South-South cooperation as an important strategy for enabling the developing countries to cope with the impact of globalization that has become such a dominant feature of the contemporary international economic relations.

Developing countries have undertaken several actions including some very innovative initiatives and approaches since the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action and the New Directions Strategy. Exchange of experiences through training, study tours and experts have asserted the efficiency, cost-effectiveness and relevance of TCDC modality. It is noteworthy that improvement has been registered in national ownership in formulating, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of TCDC programmes, projects and activities, growing awareness of TCDC modality of institutions of developing countries and recognition of the potential of the concept in the long term. In addition, increasingly, developing countries are committed to identifying "priority within priorities" to enhance effectiveness and impact of TCDC in overall development. Certainly, the structural and cultural rigidities and most importantly the lack of financial resources have adversely affected the progress in the utilization of TCDC modality.

The possibilities for South-South cooperation should not be confined to the exchange of experiences among developing countries but there is also considerable potential for expanded trade and investment among these countries. In fact, the developing countries would need to make a conscious effort to realize the tremendous potential which exists in this area.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At this juncture, I would like to express on behalf of all developing countries the high political importance that we attach to ensuring that the UN system plays a greater role in the field of development by ensuring that UN agencies and programmes continue to play their role as essential focal points for development of developing countries. In this context, I would like to make a special mention to UNCTAD and UNIDO.

The Group of 77 strongly believes that UNCTAD should, within its mandate, continue to perform its development mission in the evolving institutional context. The rapidly changing international economic environment characterized by the twin processes of globalization and liberalization present important challenges for developing countries. UNCTAD should, therefore, provide an important forum as well as an effective instrument to assist these countries to meet these challenges and benefit from the opportunities arising from the international economy. The tenth session of the Conference should contribute to the process of continuing adaptation of UNCTAD so as to enhance its development mission.

On behalf of the Group of 77, I would like also to emphasize the renewed urgency for promoting industrialization as a key element for the economies of the developing countries as a whole, and the essential role of UNIDO in that regard. We do believe that the role of UNIDO has gained increasing relevance as a result of the globalization of production and the growth of related trade, investment, technology transfer, and the implications of these developments on the industrialization of developing countries. We welcome also successful reforms completed recently by UNIDO. We are committed to strengthen and support UNIDO in fulfilling its development-oriented programmes in developing countries.

We are convinced that UNIDO, as the central coordinating organization for industrial development within the UN system, should be further strengthened. We also welcome the recent decision of the Government of the United Kingdom to rejoin UNESCO and we hope that similar steps will be taken towards supporting UNIDO.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The solidarity of the Group also rests on its historical bonds and the recognition that despite their diversity, only joint and coherent action will enable it to deal with the daily process of discussions and negotiations. I wish to recall the message extended by the Group of 77, at its thirtieth anniversary to our developed partners in the North, to work together towards a truly global partnership for development and peace.

Recent world economic and political changes have been profound. The perception of problems have changed. While actors also change, the struggle for the right for development remains the same. It is the struggle of all for prosperity, justice and equity in international economic relations.

I would like to take this opportunity to call for full and effective participation of the developing countries in the process of decision-making and in the resolution of world economic problems through strengthening

multilateralism and implementing an effective mechanism of multilateral macroeconomic policy coordination on a global basis aimed at promoting equitable growth in the world economy. I strongly believe that sustained economic growth and sustainable development of developing countries, constitute the main objective which must be pursued as a priority by the international community.

Together united we will meet the challenges for the 21st century and beyond.

I wish all success to our deliberations.

Thank you very much.