



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY JANIL GREENAWAY, MINISTER COUNSELLOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, DURING THE THIRTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION, ON AGENDA ITEM 3(N): DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS (New York, 28 February 2008)**

1. Mr. Chairman, the Group of 77 and China welcomes the opportunity to discuss the issue of development indicators, as well as the report of the Secretary General on indicators for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals, as contained in document E/CN.3/2008/29. Such a discussion, we believe, will help to inform our understanding of the challenges of monitoring the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), how we can make greater progress in this regard, and how we can close the implementation gap, which unfortunately remains the unfinished part of the development agenda.
2. Mr. Chairman, securing the effective and full implementation of the agreed goals and commitments of the major United Nations conferences and summits continues to be the highest priority of the Group of 77 and China.
3. The Group has repeatedly led calls for a sound legislative framework for pursuing a more structured and coherent approach to implementation of the MDGs and the other internationally agreed development goals (IADGs), and as we said in our statement delivered during the meeting of the Commission last year, we believe General Assembly resolution 60/265 provides a good basis for this.
4. The Statistical Commission as the intergovernmental focal point for the elaboration, refinement and the review of the implementation indicators has an important role to play in this regard. The Group of 77 and China would like to see a strengthening of the Commission's mandate as provided by General Assembly resolution 57/270 B, 60/265 and the Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/6.
5. Building on Resolution 60/265, the Group again underscores the need to evolve an intergovernmental agreement to develop a monitoring mechanism to track and promote implementation of goals and commitments. We find that there is need for a more thorough and comprehensive treatment of this issue in the report on indicators for monitoring the MDGs. Therefore, we urge the Commission to adequately address this issue, and to include it on the agenda for the next session of the Statistical Commission.
6. The group of 77 and China have also called for greater consistency in effectively monitoring the implementation of the individual MDG's and the IADG's. Notably, there are some indicators to measure progress achieved with regard to the first seven MDG's but specific benchmarks and targets are not so far available to measure the implementation of goal 8 on global partnerships for development. We have been calling on the UN and its relevant bodies to contribute to the elaboration of such specific benchmarks to facilitate the monitoring of the implementation of the MDG 8, and other IADG's.
7. We believe that the relevant parts of the UN should help in preparing a comprehensive matrix of the commitments that have been undertaken under MDG 8. The Statistical Commission has an important role to play in developing such a matrix of indicators to monitor the progress in

implementation of the agreed goals and commitments.

8. Mr. Chairman, the Group of 77 and China appreciates the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goal Indicators done in 2007, as well as that of the United Nations Statistics Division, in its capacity as coordinator of the Expert Group. As we approach the target year of 2015 for the achievement of the MDGs, we repeat the call we made last year for the Commission and the Expert Group to redouble efforts to develop a coherent and integrated system of implementation indicators based on intergovernmental consensus, which, among other things, should give a clear and complete sense of progress on the implementation of all the MDGs and IADGs.

9. In addition, Mr. Chairman, the G77 and China urges the Inter-Agency and Expert Group and the Commission to fully address the inadequate treatment of MDG 8 on global partnership for development. There needs to be a more focused and strategic approach to monitoring MDG 8, ensuring the indicators adequately capture the targets, assessing progress on this specific goal, strengthening its targets and strengthening its implementation.

10. Moreover, Mr. Chairman, the Group of 77 and China is quite concerned that the target on "full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people" has been moved from MDG 8 to MDG 1. This, we believe, goes against the spirit of partnership intended by MDG 8 itself, as well as the overall spirit of the Millennium Declaration, as it amounts to a weakening of commitments and is contrary to the spirit of international cooperation for development.

11. Given the importance of global partnership for development to the achievement of all the other MDGs, we are concerned that such shifting of targets will amount to a weakening of this important goal, and may frustrate our efforts to raise the profile of the MDGs and make greater progress on implementation of all goals at all levels.

12. The Group of 77 and China therefore calls on the Commission to review MDG 8 and its attendant targets and indicators, with a view to strengthening its implementation.

13. Mr. Chairman, successfully developing indicators for monitoring progress in achieving the MDGs depends on the scaling up of national statistical capacities. The Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Millennium Development Goals Indicators has made statistical capacity one of its top priority areas of work. We welcome this and urge the Expert Group to give greater consideration to ways and means of building and improving national statistical capacities to monitor the MDGs, and to make recommendations in this regard to the Commission.

14. In doing so, it is important that the existing initiatives for developing national capacities and agency-country coordination and consultations be made more effective on the basis of national demands and priorities. The United Nations Statistical Division should tailor its statistical capacity-building programme to strengthen the institutional statistical capacities of countries on the basis of national priorities. Further, we urge partner agencies and donors to increase financial assistance for national statistical capacity building. As recommended by the Expert Group, the Statistical Division should accelerate its efforts in this regard.

15. Mr. Chairman, having outlined the above, the Group of 77 and China respectfully requests that the report contained in document E/CN.3/2008/29 be revised to address these concerns before it is taken note of by the Commission. We would further request that such a revised report be considered among the items for discussion at the Fortieth Session of the Commission in 2009. The

Group of 77 and China will be guided by you Mr. Chairman, as well as the Secretariat, in having this adequately reflected in the report of the Commission.

16. Mr. Chairman the Group of 77 and China trusts that the issues outlined here will be given due consideration and appropriate action taken by the Commission. We look forward to continued engagement on the matters outlined in this statement, through the Commission as well as the Economic and Social Council, and to a successful outcome of this current session.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.