



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY  
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REPRESENTATIVE OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS,  
ON AGENDA ITEM 118: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2008-  
2009 - DEVELOPMENT RELATED ACTIVITIES, AT THE FIFTH COMMITTEE  
DURING THE MAIN PART OF THE SIXTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 14 October 2008)**

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on Agenda Item 118: Programme Budget for the biennium 2008-2009 - Development related activities.

2. The Group would like to thank Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro, the Deputy Secretary-General for presenting the Secretary-General reports on "Improving the effective and efficient delivery of the mandates of development-related activities" (A/62/708), as well as for her guidance in elaborating the proposals before us, and for coordinating the efforts of the departments, offices and the regional commissions involved in development related activities. We would also like to thank Ms. Susan McLurg, the Chairman of the ACABQ, for introducing the relevant Committee's report and more importantly on the quality of the ACABQ report.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Group of G77 and China strongly believes that development should not be a privilege of the few, but a right and interest of all peoples and nations. This right has been made clear over the past two decades, as world leaders agreed upon and reaffirmed a set of development goals. In this regard, we have always emphasized the importance of the United Nations development work for the achievement of internationally-agreed development goals, including the MDGs. As has been stressed on many occasions, the United Nations development agenda is as important as the Organization's work in peace and human rights. These three areas of the United Nations work are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing - a fact that cannot be overemphasized.

4. As we are working hard on all aspects of reform, let us ask ourselves a few questions: Can we practically enhance the Organization's capacities in preventing conflicts, building peace, countering terrorism, advancing human rights or consolidating principles of rule of law and democracy without strengthening, on an equal footing, development related activities? Does it make sense to continue investing in the symptoms rather than the causes?

5. The founders of the Charter 63 years ago saw this very clearly. In setting out to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, they understood that this enterprise could not succeed if it was narrowly based. This is why they created an organization to ensure respect for fundamental human rights, establish conditions under which justice and the rule of law could be maintained, and "promote social progress and better standards of life". The Charter emphasizes that not only are development, security and human rights all equally imperative, Mr. Chairman, they also reinforce each other. Regrettably, this is not the case in the United Nations today.

Mr. Chairman,

6. The 2005 World Summit recognized the need to strengthen the development pillar of the United Nations to help realize the internationally agreed development goals that have emerged from the major UN conferences and summits, including the MDGs. It created major expectations, especially in developing country member states, that the United Nations would work to fill the implementation gap between the promises and the results at the international, regional and country levels. As we speak the risks of failure of achieving agreed development goals increases dramatically. The current food and energy crises and the early stages of what is being described as the worse global economic and financial crisis since the great depression, compounded by the exacerbating effects of climate change, pose very grave challenges to the majority of developing countries, in particular the most vulnerable and least developed countries efforts to achieve the MDGs by 2015.

7. There is a strong and urgent need for the United Nations system to address these growing and interrelated challenges to development. Strengthening the analytical capacity of the Secretariat is now more imperative than ever. The United Nations must position itself to be on the cutting edge of economic and social development thinking in support to Member States' quest for simultaneously achieving of sustained growth, poverty reduction, and lasting peace and security. It is also imperative now to ensure a solid ground for discussion and promotion of norms and policy guidelines to deal with the mounting effects of the recent developments, as well as to allow for necessary improvements in substantial reports which would strengthen the overall position of the United Nations for a substantive dialogue with other organizations dealing with development issues.

8. Despite the ever-increasing demands for the United Nations to be the key global driver for development, resources allocated to implement the United Nations' Development Agenda, in terms of share of total regular budget and number of posts, have been downsized. The ACABQ report observed that combined initial appropriation for the development-related sections of the regular budget went from 21.8% in 1998-1999 to 17.8% in 2008-2009. This picture is even darker if we take into account the total sum of other budgets of the Organization, particularly the peacekeeping budgets. More specifically, the Regional Commissions have experienced substantial reduction in development resources over the last decade, losing 220 regular budget posts or more than 10% of their capacity since 1990-1991, as compared to the overall United Nation reduction of 1.2%.

Mr. Chairman,

9. Resolution 62/236 called for this comprehensive proposal on development to be presented at the first part of the sixty second resumed session of the Fifth Committee we are now in the 63rd session. The consideration of this issue is, therefore, long overdue and we regret that the General Assembly couldn't take up the subject before given that, as we already stated, development should and must be a priority for this Organization. Moreover, we believe it's even more opportune now to work collectively to address the new and emerging challenges in the context of the various crises we face today. We must therefore provide the institution with all the resources it needs to enhance and strengthen the overall capacity of the system to monitor developments and provide early warning on key development issues.

Mr. Chairman,

10. Obviously, the Secretary-General's proposals, aiming at increasing the share of development activities in the regular budget for 2008-2009 to only 18.2%, are not enough to address the current imbalance between the three pillars of the Organization or even bringing back the percentage of development related activities share in the budget to the levels of 10 years ago. However, we believe that they constitute an important step in the right direction. Still more has to be done. There

is a daunting need to keep the needs of the Secretariat in the field of development under constant review, taking into account the nature and pace of challenges to economic and social development.

Mr. Chairman,

11. As we discuss the development related activities the Group would also like to recall paragraph 73 of resolution 62/236 which had requested the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive proposal with a view to improving the effective and efficient delivery of the mandates of the development-related activities of the Secretariat, including on the Development Account. The Group understands that the SG's report on the Development Account would now be introduced separately. The Group will therefore be commenting on the SG's report in this regard during its formal introduction.

12. The Group however, would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the importance of the Development Account as a part of the United Nations overall development pillar, in view of the useful contribution it makes to the Organization's endeavours in the field of development. More than ten years after its establishment the Development Account is still nowhere near the proposed level of \$200 million. The transfer of savings to the Development Account as envisioned has not materialized and has failed to provide for an adequate level of funding of the Account. It is about time that a viable system ensuring sustained funding of the Development Account is put in place.

13. We look forward to a constructive and committed discussion on these timely and highly important proposals. We pledge to work actively with other delegations in continuation of the patient process aiming at renewing our Organization and making it more resilient and responsive to our peoples needs all over the world.

I thank you.