



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR CONROD HUNTE, DELEGATION OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, ON AGENDA ITEM 13(A): SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, AT THE SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE ECOSOC (New York, 23 July 2008)**

Mr. President:

1. I have the honour to deliver this Statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on Agenda item 13(a) regarding sustainable development, an issue which is of great importance to developing countries. The Group would also like to thank the Secretary-General and DESA for the report of the Commission.
2. The Group of 77 and China reiterates its long-held position that sustainable development must be addressed in a holistic and balanced manner, emphasising all three pillars - economic development, social development and environmental protection - which are mutually reinforcing and interrelated.
3. The Group welcomed the opportunity to have participated in the 16th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in May of this year, which deliberated on a thematic cluster of issues that is of crucial importance to developing countries - namely agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. The discussions of the Commission, in our view, reinforced the intricate link among and mutually reinforcing nature of the issues in this thematic cluster.
4. During the Commission's Sixteenth Session, the Group underscored the need for a renewed commitment to the Rio Principles, and highlighted the urgent need for decisive action on addressing implementation gaps of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) as key to achieving greater progress in sustainable development. This is an issue that we should also be seized with in the ECOSOC.
5. While it is recognised that developing countries have made remarkable and impressive gains in many of the issue areas related to sustainable development, there remain significant obstacles and constraints to the achievement of further gains. Full implementation of commitments in the context of sustainable development is critical to the advancement of the international development agenda.
6. Needless to say, Mr. President, the confluence of crises facing the international community, including climate change, the food and energy crisis, a looming global economic recession and growing turmoil in financial markets, have only served to compound an already grim situation. These challenges individually and collectively are all impacting negatively on the ability and capacity of developing countries to effectively manage them while pursuing sustainable development.
7. The deleterious impact of climate change on the development prospects of developing countries needs to be the subject of comprehensive discourse and discussion. For example, there is an urgent need for strengthening adaptation strategies in developing countries in an effort to meet sustainable development goals, particularly in Africa, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. Similarly, mitigation actions by both developed and developing countries in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities are also critical to the achievement of these goals. Needless to say, such actions will require increased financing and technology transfer to be effective. In this

regard the full implementation of the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development as well as the full implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for technology transfer becomes absolutely necessary.

Mr. President,

8. The food and energy crises have added to the growing list of myriad multidimensional challenges facing our economies. The special meeting of the ECOSOC on the Global Food crisis held two months ago as well as the Plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the Food and Energy crisis convened a few days ago, reinforced the fact that not only does the exponential rise in food and energy prices threaten to undermine the global economic system, but also the long-term achievement by developing countries of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.

9. In the face of such new and emerging challenges to sustainable development, the ECOSOC should also prioritize addressing long-standing challenges to sustainable development such as that posed by the continued unfair trading policies in developed countries, particularly related to the issue of agriculture subsidies, increasingly impacting hardest on rural populations, small-scale agriculture and the poor and most vulnerable.

10. There is also scope for the ECOSOC to serve as a catalyst for greater support by the international community for the continuing efforts of developing countries to integrate sustainable development into economic policy and planning, as well as highlighting the impeding effect that external factors can have on such efforts.

Mr. President,

11. As a functional commission of ECOSOC, the CSD is mandated to promote further implementation of Agenda 21, and to identify constraints in implementation and make recommendations to overcome these constraints. It is also mandated to review issues related to financial assistance and transfer of technology for sustainable development and capacity-building. It is therefore the role of the ECOSOC to ensure the Commission fulfills this mandate. As such, the Group hopes that next year's policy session of the Commission will address, among other things, the new and old constraints to implementation with action-oriented policy recommendations to address the shortfall of financial assistance and transfer of technology. It is important for the ECOSOC to send a strong and positive message in this regard.

Mr. President,

12. Closing the implementation gap must be accorded the highest priority if we are serious about sustainable development. We must move beyond rhetoric to action. The concerted efforts of the entire international community are therefore vital in this regard. The Group of 77 and China takes this opportunity to urge our development partners to take the steps necessary to ensure that longstanding commitments are fulfilled, and to make greater use of the potential of the ECOSOC to advance greater action in implementing JPOI and Agenda 21.

Thank you Mr. President.