



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. AWSAN AL-AUD, SECOND SECRETARY, PERMANENT MISSION OF YEMEN TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE ANNUAL SESSION OF THE UNDP/UNFPA EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING (Geneva, 21 June 2010)

Mr. President,
Executive Director,
Delegates and members of the Executive Board,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States of the Group of 77 and China. Mr. President, we congratulate you on your leadership throughout your presidency of the Executive Board of UNDP and of UNFPA.

Mr. President,

2. Allow me to also take this opportunity to thank and congratulate Ms. Thuria Ahmed Obeid for her presentation, as well as for the guidance she has provided to the UNFPA during the past years.

3. Health is central to meeting all the MDGs. In developing countries, poverty and hunger are major determinants of health. Education and the empowerment of women which could significantly contribute to the improvement of maternal health and a decrease in child mortality, in spite of the significant efforts undertaken by developing countries and some achievements in that regard, have not yet improved at appropriate levels. We express concern that between 350 - 500.000 women die every year from largely preventable complications related to pregnancy or childbirth and many developing countries are off track to achieve MDG 5 to improve maternal health, in particular Africa and South Asia where maternal deaths account for nearly 84%.

4. The HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to expand throughout the world, erasing decades of social and economic progress and having a devastating impact on population in terms of increased morbidity and mortality. For some countries, the demographic impact of AIDS is enormous. This has serious consequences for their development prospects, as they are losing their productive human resources. In 2008, about 33 million people were living with HIV, 22 million of whom lived in sub-Saharan Africa. That year, 2.7 million people became newly infected with HIV and AIDS killed 2 million persons, half of those living with HIV are women and half of new infections occur among young people aged 15 to 24.

5. The Group of 77 and China reaffirms the fact that access of women to health care, would increase their productivity and also helps to reduce maternal, as well as child mortality rates. To fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases would be to improve the health of women and girls who are disproportionately affected by these challenges. In this regard, the international community should also give priority attention to the plight of people living under foreign occupation and put an end to their suffering including by removing obstacles facing the development of their health system and by ensuring access to health care and services.

6. The G-77 and China notes with concern the lack of health workers, as well as their uneven distribution within countries, and throughout the world, in particular the shortage in Sub-Saharan Africa, which undermines the health systems of developing countries. In this regard, we underline the importance of national and international actions, including the development of health workforce

plans, to address the retention of skilled health personnel and in this regard note the recent adoption by the 63rd World Health Assembly of the Global Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Health Personnel.

Mr. President,

7. Resource gaps are especially large in poor countries, and the least developed countries entirely depend on ODA. Unless new, additional and sustained resources are provided to developing countries, it is unlikely that MDGs will be met. Instead, there will be a worsening of the population and reproductive health situation in many poor countries. In this regard, the Group note with great concern over the fact that the estimates for 2009 show signs that donor countries have reduced the already scarce resources they allocate to Official Development Assistance (ODA). The Group of 77 and China reiterates that any financial contraction by donor countries under the pretext of the global financial crisis and continuing wavering on their earlier commitments would be detrimental to the achievement of the MDGs. The Group, therefore, urges developed countries to fulfill their commitments.

8. In conclusion, Mr. President, the Group would like to thank you for your leadership and guidance throughout your presidency of the Board and we will continue to work with you and your bureau in a constructive manner throughout the rest of your presidency.

Thank you.