

JOINT STATEMENT BY G-77 AND NAM ON INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM-WIDE COHERENCE: HUMAN RIGHTS (New York, 24 July 2007)

Distinguished Mrs. Louise Arbour, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

The Joint Coordinating Committee -- that is the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement would like to welcome amongst us the presence of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and thank for her useful briefing.

1. The JCC also wishes to reiterate once again its willingness to participate constructively in the process launched by the President of the General Assembly to facilitate an intergovernmental discussion of the recommendations contained in the High-Level Panel's Report and the comments made by the Secretary-General thereon.
2. The JCC reaffirm all the elements voiced by the JCC during the plenary meeting of the General Assembly on April 16th. Consequently, both Groups reiterate their preliminary views on the Report, which were conveyed in the letter addressed to the Secretary-General by the Co-Chairs of the JCC on 19 March 2007, and in all the JCC statements during the informal meetings of the General Assembly convened last month.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

3. During the Plenary consultations held in June, the JCC had raised a practical concern regarding the scheduling of future meetings on the High Level Panel Report. It was proposed that due to the non-availability of a large number of delegations who would be in Geneva for the ECOSOC Substantive Session 2007, no meetings should be convened in July. Scheduling of this meeting today only goes to indicate how difficult it is to evolve coherence in the work of the UN system even between the two major headquarters at New York and Geneva.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

4. Pending more substantive and detailed future discussions of the several aspects and of each of the recommendations contained in the Report, the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement wish to outline the following preliminary and general fundamentals of the JCC position on Human Rights:

- First of all, the Group believes that certain recommendations in the Panel Report, even though relevant, need further details and specificity for Member States to fully understand and consider them. This reaffirms the need for continued discussion and engagement to seek clarification on all such issues before taking any decisions. The JCC will engage constructively in this endeavor.
- The JCC reaffirms the value of the principles and purposes contained in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and other human rights instruments as well as emphasize that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing,

and stress the necessity to provide equal treatment to both civil and political rights and economic, social and cultural rights, as well as the right to development.

- The JCC recalls that our leaders at the 2005 World Summit emphasized the responsibilities of all States, in conformity with the Charter, to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language or religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
- The JCC further recognizes the importance of ensuring universality, objectivity and non-selectivity in the consideration of human rights issues and the elimination of double standards and politicization as contained in the Resolution 60/251.
- With the adoption of the Human Rights Council Resolution 5/1 entitled “Institution-building of the Human Rights Council”, Member States reiterate once again that this body and its mechanisms must be conducted in an objective, transparent, non-selective, constructive, non-confrontational and non-politicized manner. The centrality of genuine dialogue and cooperation must be the tools that will augur well for the future work of the Council and its credibility.

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

5. In connection to the three recommendations included in the Panel’s report, we would like to express the following ideas:

- The JCC underscores the importance of a positive approach and constructive engagement in the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- While there are a number of useful recommendations in the report, in few areas the Panel’s Report may have touched upon some issues, such as human rights as a cross-cutting issues in the context of UN operational activities for development. While those issues are not confined only to developing countries, the Group has concern that those issues might be misused to introduce new conditionalities on international development assistance which is not acceptable to developing countries.
- It is important not to forget that the true role of Funds and Programs is to foster long-term development. The operationalization of human rights should not replace the development cooperation projects and should be additional and complementary to development cooperation activities.
- The JCC further reaffirms that the fundamental characteristics of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system should be, inter alia, their universal, voluntary and grant nature, their neutrality and their multilateralism, as well as their ability to respond to the development needs of recipient countries in a flexible manner, and that the operational activities are carried out for the benefit of recipient countries, at the request of those countries and in accordance with their own policies and priorities for development.
- There should be no restrictions on the ability and sovereignty of the national governments to determine their own development priorities or select their development partners, as well as the type of relation with the UN development entities they wish to establish at the country level. The development system should continue to support development efforts of developing countries principally by assisting in the implementation of nationally determined development plans, strategies and priorities.

Distinguished Co-Chairs:

6. Finally, let me reiterate that the Group of 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement will participate actively and constructively in this process and will continue to discuss within the JCC the merits of each and every one of the recommendations. We hope all delegations will do the same, taking into account the need to make a better contribution to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goal, including the MDGs.

Thank you.