

**Address by H.E. Ambassador S.R. Insanally, Permanent Representative of Guyana to the UN,  
Chairman of the Group of 77, at the closing ceremony of the Chairmen/Coordinators of the Chapters  
of the Group of 77**

**Geneva, 7 April 1999**

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Excellencies, distinguished Chairmen of the Chapters,  
Mr. Chairman of the Group of 24,  
Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations  
Mr. Secretary-General of UNCTAD  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am delighted on behalf of the Chairmen/Coordinators of the Group of 77 to welcome the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, to this closing session of the twenty-sixth meeting of the Chairmen/Coordinators of the Group of 77 Chapters.

Mr. Secretary-General, your attendance at this event is a further demonstration of your support for the developing countries in their continuing campaign for economic and social progress. In your person, we symbolised the hopes of mankind for a more just and equitable world. We would therefore wish to renew to you the assurances not only of our high esteem but also of our full confidence in your leadership.

As the world prepares to enter a new Millennium, our common task must be to ready the United Nations to undertake fully its responsibilities under the Charter. If the organisation is to achieve the purposes for which it was founded, if it is to maintain international peace and security and allow states to live in larger freedom, then it must be reformed on more democratic and efficient lines. The United Nations has to play a primary role in the promotion of peace and development.

The G-77 Chapters are pledged to maintaining the United Nations as the central forum for dialogue and policy-making on issues relating to international cooperation for development. We strongly believe that the right to development should be given the highest priority by the United Nations. For the second time, we need to put in place a stronger United Nations system to handle the complex problems facing the world economy today. We also need to overcome the deep financial crisis of the United Nations, which continues to constrain the Organization's ability to fully implement its mandated programmes and in the process which undermines the very future of multilateralism.

As we stand now on the cusp of a new Millennium, we must summon up the political will necessary to bring change to international relations. In this context, we see the Millennium Assembly and the Millennium Summit as momentous psychological opportunities to shape the future of mankind. We must therefore work to ensure that these events are well prepared to give fresh inspiration and momentum to international cooperation. We must aim for a forward-looking, action oriented outcome outlining practical recommendations and goals to be accompanied by firm commitments to provide the resources necessary for their implementation.

Sadly, as I noted the other day in New York, because of the disappointment and frustration generated by the failure of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, there is great pessimism that the Millennium celebration may become no more than a damp squib, unable to rekindle our hopes for the future. Of course, if such pessimism were allowed to prevail, it could very well become a self fulfilling prophecy. We must therefore do all we can to avoid this and to launch the world on a safe and promising voyage into the next century.

As this era wanes, the phenomenon of globalisation - or more accurately, global capitalism, has spread with

wild-fire contagion throughout most countries of the world. However, while its potential, opportunities and benefits have been largely recognised, there is profound disquiet as a result of the clear threat which the process holds for the further marginalisation of developing countries from the global economy. The recent crisis in Asia has demonstrated that global markets alone cannot guarantee economic stability and equity. There is undoubtedly, therefore, a vital role to be played by Governments and multilateral organisations to ensure that the opportunities provided by globalisation outweigh its negative consequences. The impact of globalisation, particularly on developing countries, needs to be further analysed with a view to managing, orienting and coordinating the globalisation process.

Mr. Secretary-General,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Over the past two days, we have been fully seized of these challenges which now defy our nations. Imbued with a sense of urgency, we have sought to define, albeit broadly, strategies by which we may together reach our goals. Equally important, we are committed to intensifying our inter Chapters dialogue in order to better coordinate our positions in the various international fora where we operate. Modern technology now affords us excellent opportunities to interface and interact, no matter the distance of separation, to enhance that cooperation. We will therefore not hesitate to use such tools to maximise our solidarity and unity of purpose. We have thus attempted not only to assess the global economic situation but also to forge common approaches to our common tasks.

In today's circumstances it is not at all surprising that South-South cooperation should feature prominently on our Agenda. We are fully persuaded of the need to emphasize the increasing importance and complementarity of economic and technical cooperation among developing countries as a means of supporting the development efforts of these countries and of ensuring their effective participation in the merging global economic order. The modality of South-South cooperation, we believe offers an important tool for our development. Accordingly, we will make every effort to pool our resources and to identify priority areas for such cooperation.

These priority areas should include cooperation among developing countries to enhance their understanding of complex global economic issues and to formulate joint strategies, especially in the field of regional and sub-regional economic cooperation. We are confident that the first ever G-77 South Summit to be held in Havana from 10 - 14 April 2000, prior to the Millennium Assembly, will provide an excellent opportunity to reassert the solidarity of developing countries' as well as their determination to act together. Indeed, coming as it will on the eve of the Millennium Assembly and Summit, the South Summit may very well set the stage for these later events.

As an integration part of the South's action programme, we shall of course aim to strengthen those institutions which have been set up to support the cause of developing countries. More particularly, as we prepare for UNCTAD X, the role of UNCTAD assumes critical importance to our negotiations.

I may recall that in Bali, Indonesia, last year, the developing countries endorsed a series of action recommendations which aim at cooperation in enlarging markets in order to capture internal and external economies of scale to pool their productive capacities where appropriate and feasible, and to develop as far as possible their collaboration in technology, production and finance. All of this with a view to enabling them to gain competitiveness and to develop the requisite capacities to enter the global market.

Mr. Secretary-General,

Since UNCTAD has such a vital contribution to make to our efforts in this direction, we were greatly pleased when you saw fit, Mr. Secretary-General, to reappoint Mr. Ruben Ricupero, who serves the Conference with such distinction and success, to another term of office. Under his direction, UNCTAD promises to satisfy the high aspirations which attended its creation in 1964, aspirations which were happily renewed and strengthened in Midrand, South Africa in 1996.

May we wish you, Mr. Secretary-General, the same wisdom and vision when you come to nominating a successor for Gus Speth as Administrator of UNDP to whom we will be paying tribute tomorrow for his enlightened service to UNDP. The programme, as you know, is dear to the hearts of developing countries and indeed, for us, it is the face of the United Nations in our countries. Therefore, while we fully respect your prerogative of choice in this matter and while we in no way wish to be accused of interference in your internal affairs, we would like to say that your choice of a replacement is of concern not only to donors but to us - as donees (if that term exists) since, after all, we represent UNDP's clientele and its most interested beneficiaries.

I trust that you, Mr. Secretary-General, will forgive me that small digression and join us today in the reaffirmation of the continued commitment of the Group of 77 to articulate and promote the collective interests of developing countries. One of the great strengths of the Group is its unity in diversity and to my mind this will make its contributions to the international dialogue on development all the more valuable and interesting.

Here in Geneva, we cannot be but reminded by the thoughts of one of its erstwhile and most famous residents in nearby Ferney, the French writer Voltaire, who noted in *Candide* that despite our diversity and adversity, we live nonetheless in "the best of all possible worlds." Nonetheless Voltaire seems to suggest that we must "cultivate our garden", to make this a better world. There can be no more meaningful charge to our G-77 Chapters. Let us therefore come together to make our world, like the gardens in Geneva, a place to which we can be truly proud.

Now it is my pleasure to invite Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations to address this Plenary meeting of the Chapter and to share with us his thoughts on the Group of 77 - UN partnership.

Thank you.