

Statement by H.E. Mr. S.R. Insanally, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Guyana to the UN, Chairman of the Group of 77, on behalf of the Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) on the Question of the Millennium Assembly and the Millennium Summit of the United Nations (A/5/CRP.1)

New York 23 April 1999

Mr. President,

Speaking for the Joint Coordinating Committee, may I welcome your appointment of the distinguished Ambassadors of Guatemala and New Zealand as coordinators. I must say also that we were somewhat surprised by the summoning of this informal meeting today to discuss the question of the Millennium Assembly.

As you know, Mr. President, our Groups are large, requiring continuous consultation in order to elaborate common positions on the wide array of issues on the international Agenda. To adequately address the Agenda, we are obliged to carefully plan our consultations and schedule our meetings, to fit the limitations of time and meeting rooms. Moreover, as you know, on this matter we seek to coordinate our position closely with the Non Aligned Movement in an effort to speak with one voice. Our consultations have been eminently worthwhile but require appropriate arrangements to ensure full harmonisation of views.

This is why, Mr. President, from the very outset of our exchange of views, we had requested the establishment, however tentative, of a programme of work that would allow us to rationally prepare ourselves for these meetings. In accepting the informal procedure, at least for this stage of our discussions, we had made it clear that the format and approach should allow for the full participation of all member states. Certainly, the announcement yesterday of a meeting to be held today does not allow for any meaningful contribution at this session. We would therefore reiterate our plea that our exchanges be somewhat more structured to accommodate our full involvement.

Because of the suddenness with which this meeting was convened, I can do no more today than confirm the Joint Coordinating Committee's position on some of the more important aspects of our preparation.

First, as far as the timing of the event is concerned, there is a distinct preference for it to be held early rather than later in the Assembly. The reason for this preference is two-fold: not only will it be more convenient and less costly for our Heads in terms of their travel arrangements to attend the Assembly but, held at the beginning, the Summit can also set the tone and assist the outcome of our work for the entire year.

This was clearly the view expressed by all who spoke at the consultations which have been held thus far, leading me to conclude that there is overwhelming, if not unanimous support for a September Summit. I would therefore like to urge that serious consideration be given to this widely held position.

Accordingly, Mr. President, you may wish to ask our two distinguished coordinators, the Ambassadors of Guatemala and New Zealand, to undertake urgent consultations with the interested parties in order to reach a consensus on this issue. It is to be hoped that those who have proposed alternative dates would demonstrate some flexibility and will seriously consider the thoughts he has expressed this morning, to undertake urgent consultations with the interested parties in order to reach a consensus on this issue. It is to be hoped that those who have proposed alternative dates would demonstrate some flexibility and rally around the prevailing sentiment on the matter. In this context, we welcome the remarks of the distinguished Ambassador of Germany, particularly his indication of flexibility on the issue of timing and we shall certainly consider the ideas which he has expressed today.

As to the question of a theme/themes for the Summit, we again feel that the two coordinators can help to broker consensus. From what we have heard thus far, it should not be too difficult to identify the topics which could profitably be discussed by our Heads. Among those, which have been frequently aired, are poverty eradication, human security and some other themes which, though seemingly different, all relate to the paramount issues of peace and development. With some imagination and a bit of compromise, we can come up, we believe with a short list of a few issues which could stimulate the thinking of participants. Once the topics have been identified, all that would remain to be done is to find a broad and captivating banner which may be presented.

Turning to the format, we perceive a growing trend of opinion toward an interactive process which, at the same time, is inclusive enough to provide for full and productive participation. In this regard, suggestions have to be made that envisage a mix of short, formal statements and a free flow of views around a common theme or themes. Obviously, the disposition of time between these two patterns will depend on the number of days made available and the number of heads attending the Summit. As far as the length of the Meeting is concerned, the Joint Coordinating Committee are on record as agreeing to a span of three to five days.

May I finally reaffirm, Mr. President, the strong interest of the Joint Coordinating Committee in seeing a positive outcome from the Summit. Our conviction is that with sufficient preparation and political will we should be able to secure both an inspiring declaration of renewed commitment to multilateralism but also an action programme for meaningful international cooperation.

I would wish to conclude on this note Mr. President, but also to remind of the need for more advance scheduling of our meetings in order to guarantee our full and meaningful participation.

I thank you, Mr. President.

G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-7

G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-7

G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-7

G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-7

G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-7

G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-7

G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-77 G-7