

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. AMBASSADOR S.R. INSANALLY, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, BEFORE THE AD-HOC WORKING GROUP ON FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

New York, 4 May 1999

Mr. Co-Chairman,

Let me, first of all, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, thank you and your fellow Co-Chairman for submitting a consolidated list of the main issues discussed by the Ad Hoc Working Group under the eight broad rubrics suggested by the Secretary-General's report.

The list is, in our view, sufficiently comprehensive and detailed to serve as a basis on which further dialogue can take place and possibly, even as annotations for a draft agenda. The list should therefore be preserved and kept in view as a reference document.

The important question now is how do we structure our deliberations so that they may respond to the mandate of Resolutions No. 52/179 and 53/183 by setting the arrangements for the high-level forum on Financing for Development, including the form, scope and agenda of the event. As has already been noted, the end result will depend on the care and dedication with which we manage the preparatory process.

In their present shape, the issues on the list may appear to be like so many ornaments which we may use to decorate a Christmas tree. If they are not selected and used with a sense of balance and perspective, the tree itself may be lost from view and possibly could collapse under the weight of so much festooning. We should therefore orient them in such a way to allow for more focused discussions without losing sight of the various concerns, ideas and proposals which have been evoked in the course of the discussions held thus far. To this end, we may seek to identify a broad set of objectives which would provide a framework for a comprehensive agenda. As our dialogue evolves, it may be possible to come up with a number of broad cross-cutting themes that could capture all the facets identified thus far, and provide such a framework,

If this were generally accepted, it would be possible to conceive of a four to five-day event at the highest political level to consider a set of recommendations that could be transformed into agreement between the partners, both developed and developing countries for subsequent implementation. The venue for the high-level event as with previous conferences could be provided by a willing host. Alternatively, if there are no offers, it could be held here at the United Nations since not only will it be convenient for all, but it could also serve to reinforce the role of the world organization in the area of development. Our Group would be disposed to considering either alternative.

Such a scenario presumes, of course, that in the interim, the search for consensus on collective measures will continue. Through a series of exploratory exchanges, both formal and informal, we may be able to identify actions on which agreement may be readily found. At the same time, those which require further consultation may be noted and dealt with at an appropriate time. Thus, at the end of the preparatory process, we will have assembled the building blocks of a plan for the future financing for development,

As to the format of the meeting, it may be wise to hold this in abeyance until we have a determination on the full scope of the agenda. These two aspects are closely inter-related and should therefore be treated in tandem.

With regard to the level of participation, Mr. Chairman, we believe that like the major sectoral UN meetings

convened during recent years, it should be held at the highest level i.e. at the level of Heads of Government. And following the pattern of these past conferences, it should envisage a set of agreed principles and measures accompanied by mechanisms that could ensure appropriate follow-up.

To maximize the prospects of success for our efforts, it is important to involve in the ongoing exercise all relevant international institutions and agencies, Those that come readily to mind are the Bretton Woods Institutions - the IMF and World Bank Group and Agencies like the UNDP and UNICEF which mobilize international funding for development activities. Our Group would have no objection to appropriate participation of these organizations at all future stages of our deliberations since as operatives in the field, they will undoubtedly have an important contribution to make by way of expert guidance. It would also be important to devise ways of engaging the private sector, NGOs and other civil society actors in the preparatory process.

We may go further to say that the holding of these auxiliary events should not await the final event, but rather, should be arranged intermittently throughout the preparatory process to sustain interest in and provide inputs for the process and its outcome. One may even contemplate as has been mooted a Davos-type forum which brings together a wide array of personalities and organizations active in development to contribute to the reservoir of ideas and to attract widespread interest and involvement in the Conference. Naturally, the timing of such an event would be important since if held too early, it would lose impact while if held too close to the main event, it may very well overshadow the deliberations, In order to guarantee maximum publicity for the event, Mr. Chairman, it may not be a bad idea to enlist the assistance of the Department of Public Information which, with its professional hand, can help us to mount an attractive and effective campaign.

These are for the time being, Mr. Chairman, some of our Group's thoughts on the issue of the form, scope and agenda of the forum on the financing for development. We offer them as an initial contribution to the exchange of views on these topics. We will, of course, be prepared to amplify upon them in the days ahead. In conclusion, I would like to express the hope that the congeniality which has characterized our deliberations thus far, will continue to prevail in our future exchanges.

I thank you.