

STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. MAKARIM WIBISONO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA, CHAIRMAN OF THE DELEGATION OF INDONESIA AND ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BEFORE THE 20TH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE WORLD DRUG PROBLEM

New York, 9 June 1998

Mr. President,

It is my great pleasure and distinct honour to address to this Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to countering the world drug problem together on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. I should like to first express sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General, for his sincere and thought provoking remarks delivered earlier to the General Assembly, and for the positive and constructive steps that he has initiated within the Organization to improve its drugs programme.

Mr. President,

Over the past years, the international community has continuously expressed its commitment and determination to bring an end to the illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and to cure the illness of drug abuse. This special session of the General Assembly is an important reaffirmation of that commitment and a demonstration of our undiminished resolve in finding effective and lasting solutions to this problem, which adversely impacts on all member states.

This special session also serves as an important link between the considerable progress that we have made in the past, and the evolving needs and challenges of the twenty-first century. From the comprehensive and balanced approach that emerged from the 1987 International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, and at the seventeenth special session of this General Assembly, together with the agreements forged in various international conventions to combat the drugs problem, the international community has set a firm and determined course for action. We in the Group of 77 and China recognize the need to adapt current approaches, as appropriate, to new trends in illicit trafficking and drug abuse, such as the illicit manufacture, trafficking and consumption of synthetic drugs. We recognize the need to set definite goals and time-frames for action, and for implementing the programmes that have been so eloquently supported in this and other forums.

Mr. President,

It is timely for the Member States to close the gap between the identification of illicit drugs problems, and finding resolution to them. To begin, the Group of 77 and China believe that the relevant bodies within the United Nations system, such as the International Narcotics Control Board and the United Nations Drug Control Programme, must receive the support necessary to fully and effectively implement their mandates and act as catalytic forces for action. We welcome, in this connection, the strengthening of the crime and drugs prevention capacity of the United Nations, through the establishment of the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention. We firmly believe that only through the United Nations driven action can we avoid drifting into interventionist, short-term solutions, and better implement a multilateral programme that is founded on the principle of joint responsibility, coordination of action and equality among States.

We in the Group of 77 have always cautioned against the ever present temptation to embark on a campaign against the supply side of the illicit narcotics problem, without also devoting substantial resources and serious efforts to reducing illicit drugs demand, which fundamentally is the driving force of the drugs problem. We believe that any effort aimed at demand reduction should be multifaceted and include not only education,

prevention and public information campaigns, but also a strong effort for rehabilitation and social reintegration for those who have succumb to drug abuse. The Group of 77 and China therefore support the adoption of the draft Declaration on the Guiding Principles of Demand Reduction, which provides the first ever comprehensive agreement concerned in its entirety with the multidimensional aspects of illicit demand.

At the same time, we in the Group of 77 and China recognize that strong measures must be implemented to counter the illicit manufacture, trafficking and distribution of narcotics and psychotropic substances, thus attaining a truly balanced and comprehensive approach. This should also include action to control precursors through the adoption and strict enforcement of relevant legislation, and improved cooperation among national governments and with the International Narcotics Control Board. The Action Plan against Illicit Manufacture, Trafficking and Abuse of Amphetamine-type Stimulants and their Precursors, lends greater priority to this growing aspect of the drugs problem, and is a timely initiative.

The Group of 77 and China also join in supporting the UN Drug Control Programmes global effort to eliminate illicit crops and to end such cultivation in the near future. We strongly underline, in this regard, that alternative development must always be made a priority, in which crop substitution is accompanied by programmes aimed at the full integration into society of those social groups involved in such activity, through comprehensive socio-economic development programmes.

In addressing the illicit drugs problem in its entirety, we cannot escape the dimension of poverty and the desperate situation faced by the vast majority of the world's population. For it is abject poverty and the despair it nurtures which perpetuates the drugs trade and the abuse of narcotics, and it is grappling with the consequences of poverty which prevents many of the developing countries from fully participating in solutions. The desperate plight of the developing countries becomes even more evident and more tragic when we consider that the revenue from the illegal drug trade is near ten times the level of Official Development Assistance. And while the illicit drugs trade continues to prosper, ODA continues its downward spiral. We cannot stress enough the vital importance of the development dimension, and the role that poverty and socio-economic exclusion play in the illicit activities, such as the cultivation of illicit crops. The Group of 77 and China therefore, welcome the draft Action Plan on International Cooperation on Eradication of Illicit Drug Crops and Alternative Development, which reflects an in-depth understanding of the problem and is a positive framework for international and national responses. We only hope that it will pass the test of time and be fully implemented.

Likewise, at national and international levels we should not only direct attention at those illicit activities carried out by the poor, but also work to deny the profits generated through the money-laundering industry, which should figure prominently in any new strategy. The advent of globalization, with the advance of trade liberalization and free trade zones, has made this problem more difficult than ever to address. Current estimates indicate that approximately two trillion dollars cross the globe every day, present untold opportunity for organized crime syndicates. We do need to adopt additional measures to address this trend, which, if left unchecked, will continue to pose a threat to international financial and trading systems, and continue to provide vast financial resources to international drug cartels.

The Group of 77 and China therefore join in urging full implementation of the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, particularly those provisions against money laundering. Furthermore, we look to the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention to provide, within the framework of its global programme against money-laundering, the necessary training, advice and technical assistance to the Member States, on their request. To ensure a universal application of the 1988 Convention, we would strongly encourage all States to sign the convention and to display their political will to combat illicit drugs by cooperating in its implementation.

Before concluding, Mr. President, I should like to stress the importance of strengthening the functioning and

governance of the drug-control bodies of the United Nations system, and ensuring in particular the adequate funding of the UNDCP as a key body for multilateral advocacy. Moreover, the Group of 77 and China would draw particular attention to the importance of strengthening coordination within the United Nations system, such as in the area of international and national training programmes. Additional effort also needs to be made to bring the System-wide Action Plan from being an effective mechanism of problem definition to one of coordination of activities.

Mr. President,

The Group of 77 and China have no misconception of the magnitude of the problems faced and the difficult road that lies ahead in our common efforts to implement an effective and forceful anti-drugs strategy. Nevertheless, we recognize that while some countries in this Assembly are more directly affected and challenged, none of us are immune. The illicit drugs trade continues to spread like a cancer through our international community. The Group of 77 and China therefore lend their full support to implementing the elements of the new Political Declaration which this Assembly will soon adopt, as well as the several new action plans. Now, together, we will build on the foundation of the past and shape such an effective action-oriented strategy for lasting and positive change. Thank you.