

Statement by Mr. Sutjiptohardjo Donokusumo of the Delegation of Indonesia, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China before the Plenary Session of the 53rd General Assembly, on Agenda Item 160: Global Implications of the year 2000 date conversion problem of computers

New York, 7 December 1998

Mr. President,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

At the outset, the Group wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the report on "Steps taken within the United Nations system to resolve the year 2000 date conversion problem of computers" contained in document A/53/574. It also wishes to express its gratitude to the Ad-hoc Working Group on Informatics for its valuable contributions made to the work of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the Y2K issue. We are particularly grateful to the Chairman of the Working Group, Ambassador Ahmad Kamal, for the dynamic stewardship that he brings to the deliberations of the Working Group.

Mr. President,

The nature of the Y2K problem and its implications for all countries makes it imperative to promote a degree of awareness among Member States. Given the indisputable fact that the Y2K problem is a global one having profound consequences for the entire global community, it requires global concerted and intensified efforts to rectify it within the immovable time-frame.

In this regard, the Group notes with appreciation the efforts of the Working Group on Informatics, including in particular its plan to hold the Y2K National Coordinators Meeting on 11 December 1998. The Group has also noted other achievements of the Working Group with regard to Y2K, such as the informatics symposiums, the suggested guidelines for addressing the Y2K problem adopted by ECOSOC during its 1998 substantive session, as well as its repeated newsletters and circulars which keep the Member States abreast of the latest activities and useful information about the Working Group. Such initiatives will not only create a level of awareness of the problem, but will also help in dealing with it in an effective manner. In this regard, it can not be denied that even greater efforts need to be exerted, including the holding of regional workshops on Y2K and related issues like contingency planning and crisis management, thereby assisting the developing states to confront this issue effectively.

Developing states, unfortunately, lack adequate resources to deal with a problem of such magnitude. Furthermore, since developing countries will be the most negatively impacted due to their vulnerable position, they will need assistance both in the form of technical know-how and financial resources in order to effectively tackle those effects. In an increasing globalized world of the contemporary times, the failures of the developing world to address the problem effectively would bound to have contagious effects on the rest of the world.

It is therefore most appropriate and relevant that the General Assembly adopted resolution 52/233, and the fact that the draft resolution before us today also requests the Secretary-General to ensure that the UN system closely monitors actual and potential sources of funding to support the efforts of the developing countries to address the year 2000 problem, and to facilitate the dissemination of relevant information on those funding possibilities to the Member States.

Mr. President,

The Group has noted that at last year's session the resolution on this item was adopted by consensus. Such was also the case in ECOSOC with its resolution on "Suggested guidelines for addressing the year 2000 problem of computers". With regard to the resolution before us, we are pleased to lend it our support.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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