



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. HASSAN ABOUTAHIR, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 97: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT:(B) ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 20 October 2003)**

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I am pleased to address the issue under agenda item 97: Operational Activities for Development: (b) Economic and Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. I would like to express our gratitude for the reports made available under this agenda item. We also appreciate the remarks made by the TCDC Unit in the introduction of these reports.

Mr. Chairman,

Since its inception, the Group of 77 has always attached fundamental importance to promoting economic and technical cooperation among developing countries. Such cooperation is necessary to maximize complementarities for accelerating the development of their economies. The historic Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA), adopted twenty-five years ago in September 1978 and subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly, was an ambitious expression of the aspirations of developing countries and a reflection of their desire to promote economic cooperation among themselves as a complement to North-South cooperation and as an integral part of the collective action of the Group aimed at the promotion of international cooperation for development.

The adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action marked the beginning of a new phase of such cooperation, providing as it did, a blueprint with a well-defined mechanism for implementation and a follow-up. The major thrust of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action remains of vital importance and is even more relevant today as a result of the aftermath of globalization and liberalization. The Group of 77 renews its commitment to intensify cooperation among developing countries towards the attainment of collective self-reliance as is evidenced in the Havana Programme of Action (HPA) adopted by the First Summit of the Group of 77.

As the Group of 77 pointed out on many occasions, the Buenos Aires Plan of Action and the Havana Programme of Action are unique in concept; both provide a plan of action with clearly laid down mechanisms for support, follow-up and review with diverse components woven together into a precise timetable for implementation. They should have provided the dynamism to South-South cooperation that was earlier lacking. The experience of the past 25 years has raised several questions particularly those related, inter alia, to the financing of South-South cooperation. Today, there is a need to find appropriate organizational modalities to tap effectively resources from various international organizations and financial institutions that could be directed towards supporting South-South cooperation activities and programmes and to outline a common strategy to foster international support for the regional and sub-regional economic cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

We are pleased to see that the TCDC Unit after 25 years of its existence has been successful in discharging its mandate by responding effectively to the new needs of developing countries. The new Unit for South-South cooperation together with the Bureau during its new intersessional meetings with a new vision of international cooperation or development will succeed extensively in helping face the new challenges of development.

As we stressed during the 13th Session of the High-level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC), there have been quite a number of positive and encouraging developments towards the achievement of the objectives set out in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action.

South-South cooperation has the potential to become a mainstream modality in all regions and most sectors. On this occasion, let me salute on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the decision adopted by the High-level Committee on the Review of TCDC aiming at convening its intersessional meetings by the Bureau in order to ensure an effective implementation of the outcome of the Committee. This decision reflects the expression of political will and commitment by developed and developing countries to maintain during the intersessional period continued support towards achieving the objectives of South-South cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

The support of the international community for South-South cooperation activities is another dimension requiring mobilization and action, which is necessary also in support of the initiatives for regional and sub-regional integration, which have been undertaken by the developing countries. We are convinced that the new vision for South-South cooperation could also stimulate more concrete and more substantial responses to the specific needs of development of developing countries.

With the increasing complementarities among developing countries, the enhancement of our technical cooperation is more than ever urgent today than it was 25 years ago. The main focus for intensifying South-South cooperation centers on the Buenos Aires Plan of Action and the Havana Programme of Action. While the implementation of these two programmes have positive results, much more however needs to be done with the support of our partners within the context of triangular arrangements.

The pivotal countries have been playing a crucial role in TCDC, including through sharing their expertise and resources with other developing countries. These countries have increased national resource allocation for programmes to provide technical assistance to partner countries and designed specific TCDC programmes to address the needs of those recipient countries. The allocation of resources by pivotal countries should be leveraged by more assistance and resources from donor countries to expand the scope and impact of relevant programmes.

The role of the private sector in promoting South-South cooperation can certainly contribute to the expansion of the scope of such cooperation. The High-level Committee, in the framework of its thematic discussion this year, focused on the role of private sector in promoting South-South cooperation, including triangular cooperation. In fact, there is a concern that the private sector is not sufficiently engaged in South-South cooperation.

Triangular cooperation enhances the ownership and lowers the costs of development programmes and strengthens the partnership among developing countries on one hand and among developing

and developed countries on the other hand. The new vision should place its focus on triangular cooperation and related innovative approaches in promoting South-South cooperation.

The role of UNDP and the Special Unit for TCDC in promoting and expanding the scope and vision for technical cooperation among developing countries has been outstanding. The effort of the UNDP to promote TCDC in the national, regional and global programmes of UNDP is to be encouraged and supported. The orientation towards focusing technical cooperation among developing countries undertaken by the organizations and agencies of the United Nations System on a number of strategic issues of common concern to a large number of developing countries is to be commended. These activities should ultimately contribute to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

In this context, the Heads of State and Government in Havana at the South Summit stressed the importance of the TCDC Unit and invited, I quote, “the Administrator of the UNDP to strengthen the TCDC Unit as the UN focal point for South-South cooperation through the preservation of its separate identity and the provision of adequate resources to ensure the full implementation of decisions of the South Summit under its sphere of competence and to enable it to carry out its relevant mandates and responsibilities” (end of quotation). While stressing the need to further strengthen Special Unit, we believe that its activities and programmes should be perceived as an integral part of the overall development policy of UNDP and the UN system.

Mr. Chairman,

Capabilities and capacities to expand substantially exchanges of experiences and good practices, sharing technical resources and information, joint activities in research and development have been constrained by lack of resources as I said before. Increase in the allocation of more resources by donor countries to the core resources of UNDP could contribute to the increasing allocation of core resources to the Special Unit for TCDC. We also hope that additional financial resources could be mobilized, including through new and innovative mechanisms to promote and enhance TCDC activities. Broad-based partnership for South-South cooperation with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, including private sector and NGOs, could also facilitate mobilization of more resources for such activities. As a very practical measure, a stronger support and an enhanced contribution of resources to the Voluntary Trust Fund on South-South Cooperation by the donor community as well as by developing countries is also necessary for promotion of South-South cooperation.

The Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund for Economic and Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (PGTF), which was established in accordance with the United Nations General Assembly resolution 38/201 of 20 December 1983, has served as an important source of funding for small-scale catalytic projects on South-South cooperation. In order to enable PGTF to continue being responsive to the increase needs of developing countries, it is absolutely imperative that its resources be significantly expanded, particularly on the occasion of the forthcoming UN Pledging Conference on 4 November 2003.

Mr. Chairman,

While celebrating the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, we now look forward to the High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation to be held in Marrakech (Morocco) from 16 to 19 December 2003. We are confident that the deliberations, which will take place during this important meeting, will enable us to advance the action-oriented objectives and concrete initiatives of South-South cooperation as an indispensable part of a broader strategy of international development cooperation with the support of our development partners.

The High-level Conference will place the focus on the implementation of the identified priorities and extract from existing plans and programmes a number of concrete elements for implementation. The focus of the Marrakech Conference will be placed on areas in which immediate action can be taken.

We are looking forward to achieving in the High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation in Marrakech a set of concrete initiatives and measures, which should be action-oriented and encompasses implementable actions in the field of South-South cooperation. The Marrakech Conference should not lead to the adoption of new programmes or plans of action but should be seen as an opportunity for developing countries to advance towards operationalizing the decisions already taken during the past Conferences and Summits.

To this end, the Group of 77 and China relies on developed countries' invaluable contribution and inputs. Open to the participation of developed countries, the Marrakech Conference counts on the pivotal role that the countries of the North are playing to help developing countries to advance South-South cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would like to reiterate our position regarding the urgent need for the United Nations to celebrate a UN Day for South-South Cooperation and to declare a UN Decade for South-South Cooperation. This will enhance the awareness of the importance of South-South Cooperation in the new context of globalization and interdependence and in completing North-South cooperation for development and growth in developing countries.

Mr. Chairman,

We hope to build on the achievements of the past and to lay the ground for solid progress in the future. In this context, we hope to carry forward the results achieved during the 13th Session of the High-level Committee on TCDC. Our Group attaches continuing priority to the closer integration of ECDC and TCDC and to the strengthening of regional and sub-regional cooperation mechanisms. We seek also the closer involvement of the business and private sector actors in the advancement of South-South cooperation.

Conscious of the enormous potential of South-South cooperation as an engine of global economic growth and social progress, the Group of 77 and China is determined to fully exploit its benefits not only for the countries of the South but for the world at large.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, let me say that the Group of 77 and China looks forward to the forthcoming Marrakech Conference as an occasion to provide new impetus and dynamism to cooperation among developing countries in sectors of strategic importance. We also look forward in engaging our partners in the developed world in a new strategic partnership for development in a globalized world.

I thank you.