

**Statement by Ambassador Vicente Vallenilla, Deputy Permanent Representative of Venezuela to the United Nations, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, on agenda item 87: “Environment and Sustainable Development”, sub-item a) “Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Plan for its further implementation”**

**New York, November 13, 2002**

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Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, it is an honour for my Delegation to refer to the item related to Environment and Sustainable Development and, in particular, to the implementation of Agenda 21. We wish to express our surprise for the characteristics of the publication of the Report on the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Doc. A/CONF.199/20. This report contains several types of letters, divisions between texts, reasons for which the Group would highly be grateful if a clarification is provided.

If we are going to refer to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Plan for its further implementation, it will necessarily take us to reflect on the road we should follow in order to achieve international measures of sustainable development, coherent and action oriented; on well balanced basis among the three pillars of sustainable development that would allow to overcome past deficiencies, especially those related to overlapping functions, lack of adequate coordination among the different Secretariats and bureaucratic organizations and, above all, that would allow to advance towards the achievement of sustainability not only for the developing but for the developed countries as well.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June of 1992, marked the birth of a new way to focus on this matter and a new relationship between environment and development, which consolidated the basis of a new world vision of sustainable development. In this Conference the international community took a step forward in the endeavors towards the consolidation of a true spirit of solidarity in favour of development, when they adopted a group of visionary Principles and a plan of action without precedent in the history of the United Nations: Agenda 21. The Earth Summit, in introducing this advancement on the road toward sustainable development, propelled a series of agreements, programmes of action and conferences addressed to deal with the problems of sustainable development.

There is no doubt of the progress made in the Earth Summit. Nonetheless, when we face the reality of the world's condition from the perspective of its three pillars, we realize that the magnitude of the problems is still there and the challenges for present and future generations continue to grow. The alarming poverty index is there, the threats to the world environment larger every day, and all this under the umbrella of an unsustainable development pattern that continues to reign, based in production and consumption patterns equally unsustainable with economic, social and environmental consequences on a global scale, particularly, in developing countries. The reality is disheartening when we realize that Agenda 21 objectives have not been accomplished.

In the recent World Summit on Sustainable Development, that took place in Johannesburg, the Heads of State and/or of Government reaffirmed their commitment to Sustainable Development when they adopted an Implementation Plan based on the goals of the Millennium, among others. We should make a joint effort to crystallize these actions. The Group of 77 and China call upon the international community to comply with the commitments established in Johannesburg. We need to advance, but without an adequate international cooperation, the necessary financial resources and a strong political will, all this effort will be lost, and, what is even worse, it will bring about a series of economic, social and environmental consequences that might

collapse many developing countries. On the other hand, the credibility of the multilateral system is at stake. Let us not lose the opportunity that we now have with the platform for action, adopted at Johannesburg in order to fully implement Agenda 21 in a holistic manner.

How to go from praxis to action? The Group of 77 and China reiterate their call to the achievement of a major coherence and coordination of policies within the work of all involved organs in the management of sustainable development to promote more integrated visions of the economic, social and environmental aspects. Indeed, it is required that the CSD work in a more efficient manner and comply with its role of policy guidance, with a realistic working programme, with objectives that can be accomplished on balanced and integrated basis among the three pillars of sustainable development. On the other hand, an action-oriented UNEP is needed. A UNEP strengthened, within its mandate, to encourage and promote the activities of the environment sphere within the United Nations system.

We firmly believe that implementation of Agenda 21 should continue in concert with that of other conferences that have taken place since 1992. We should pay special attention to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation to launch new initiatives, which will continue to depend on a “firm political will, practical measures and firm alliances”, as the Secretary General has recognized in his report on the implementation of Agenda 21.

Regarding the Fresh Water issue, we recognize the efforts for preparations of the International Year of Fresh Water, scheduled for 2003. It will be the first practical opportunity to support and promote actions to advance towards the achievement of the Millennium goal to “reduce by half in 2015, the percentage of people that lack access to fresh water or that cannot afford it”. These initiatives should be promoted and should be supported by the international community.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman