



STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR STAFFORD NEIL, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE INFORMAL MEETING OF THE PLENARY OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO CONTINUE AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE REPORT OF THE HIGH-LEVEL PANEL ON THREATS, CHALLENGES AND CHANGE (New York, 27 January 2005)

Mr. President,

The Group of 77 and China welcomes the opportunity to give its views and comments on the Report of the High Level Panel.

I will be addressing only those areas of the Report dealing with economic and social development issues, principally examined in section III of the Report, and the recommendations on poverty, infectious diseases and environmental degradation which appear as numbers 1-11 and 87-89 dealing with the Economic and Social Council.

Mr President,

The Group of 77 and China views the report of the High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change as a useful contribution to assessing current challenges to international peace and security and actions required to enable the international community to deal with these challenges. We acknowledge the inter-connectedness of the threats and challenges and mutual vulnerability of Member States. We believe that these challenges cannot be met by any State acting alone and thus require international cooperative action.

The G77 & China welcomes the fact that the Report of the Panel has emphasised the importance of economic and social development of developing countries. The Group, however, feels that the Panel has not adequately analysed the development-related issues. We question the conceptual underpinnings of the Report which sees development in the context of addressing prevention of terrorism and organised crime. This rather narrow and restricted approach diminishes the importance of an issue which in itself represents one of the major challenges of our time and which requires analysis of the broader and systemic aspects of global economic relations. Furthermore, location of development issues within the confines of security threats and prevention strategies would lead to an undesirable alteration in the balance of responsibilities between the various organs of the system. It would contribute to increased concentration of power in the hands of the Security Council and further undermine the role of the Economic and Social Council.

We believe that what is needed is a renewed focus on development cooperation which the Charter proclaims as one of its principal purposes and a strengthening of the institutional machinery dedicated to that purpose. For the G77 and China, development has to be considered in a comprehensive manner, in the context of a principal concern with human dignity and human welfare. We are therefore troubled that development is examined in the Report in such a selective manner, focussing only in terms of poverty, infectious diseases and environmental degradation and only insofar as they affect or influence international peace and security.

These are our general comments on the analytical framework of the Report and, Mr. President, I now turn to the recommendations which have been put forward which have a significant development dimension, namely recommendations 1 to 11 on page 79 of document A/50/565. The Group supports the recommendations on the need for states to commit themselves to the goals of eradicating poverty; reaching the 0.7 percent target of ODA; concluding the Doha round of trade negotiations by 2006; providing greater debt relief and longer rescheduling, improving market access; devoting more resources to the fight against HIV/AIDS, and other infectious diseases; improving health facilities; and stemming environmental degradation. What concerns us most is that the recommendations do not prescribe specific actions and timeframes to move the process toward implementation. They amount to a simple reiteration of what has been agreed in the past. We would have preferred to have seen recommendations which are more concrete and substantive in nature. We re of the view that the focus should be on implementation and it is from this perspective that we believe that there was a missed opportunity to deal more effectively with the development issues.

With respect to the specific recommendations, the Group of 77 and China would wish to make the following observations:

- (i) we support the reaffirmation of established policies in recommendations 1 and 2;

- (ii) recommendation number 3, while useful, should stress the development dimension of the Doha round and emphasise the need for the interests and concerns of developing countries to be taken into account in the negotiated outcome;
- (iii) recommendation 4 could be broadened to include reference to middle-income countries which are in need of debt relief, rescheduling and improved access to global markets;
- (iv) recommendations 5 & 6, while pointing to the need for greater resources to be devoted to the fight against HIV/AIDS, should also emphasise the importance of the issue of access to and affordability of drugs for treatment of HIV/AIDS infected persons;
- (v) on the matter of recommendation 7 which calls for the convening of a special session on HIV/AIDS by the Security Council, the Group believes that consideration of HIV/AIDS should remain with the General Assembly which is capable of dealing with the subject matter in its different dimensions – health, development and security.
- (vi) we welcome recommendation 8, calling for a new global initiative to rebuild and support national public health systems. It would have been helpful if we had something more by way of a plan and a process which is needed to advance such a proposal.
- (vii) on environmental issues, we consider the approach to be too selective and should be made consistent with the comprehensive nature of the recommendations approved in Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI). Issues such as unsustainable patterns of production and consumption in the developed world, the transfer of environmentally sound technologies on concessional and preferential terms to developing countries, and the principle of common and differentiated responsibilities in preventing and reversing environmental degradation should be reflected and addressed. The Group would like to reiterate the importance it attaches to the full implementation of Agenda 21 and the JPOI, maintaining their integrity and supporting the Commission on Sustainable Development in following-up their implementation.

The Group would also have welcomed concrete recommendations, on such matters as desertification and also on natural disasters, especially since recent events have dramatically demonstrated the threat and destabilising effect of such phenomena. The issue of natural disasters is mentioned in paragraph 73 which notes that the UN and international financial institutions should do more to assist those states most vulnerable to severe natural disasters. Accordingly, we would have expected to see it addressed in the recommendations.

Mr President,

Turning now to the issues of governance, in paragraph 56 the Panel Report states that existing global economic and social governance structures are woefully inadequate for the challenges ahead. This is a powerful conclusion, but surprisingly, no serious recommendations were made to address the issue. No serious attention was given to an increased role for the ECOSOC. Indeed we are perturbed by the Panel's conclusions in paragraph 274. This is disappointing for the Group of 77 & China which attaches importance to ECOSOC fulfilling its role in accordance with its mandate under the Charter. We therefore would not support any proposal to weaken the ECOSOC and its role in giving prominence to economic and social issues within the UN. The role of ECOSOC, as envisaged in the Charter, should be strengthened, not reduced to one of administrative coordination and to research and analysis of the economic and social threats to peace and security. The premise of the analysis of the link between security and development should not, in our view, be used as a basis to strengthen the role of the Security Council *vis-à-vis* the other Principal Organs of the UN. The Group intends to provide more specific comments and proposals with respect to the strengthening of the ECOSOC at the meeting scheduled to be held on 22 February.

Mr President,

By way of general observations, we should note that the Report does not adequately address many issues of concern to the South, including the systemic inequities which restrict the flow of benefits from the process of globalisation and which limit the participation of developing countries in trade, monetary and financial institutions. We need more specific institutional prescriptions which envisage a role for the UN in decision-making in global economic policies. Some of these systemic inequities are addressed in a more comprehensive manner in the Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation entitled: *A Fair Globalisation: Creating opportunities for All*. We would urge the Secretary General to take its recommendations into account in the preparation of his report for the High Level Plenary Meeting.

I thank you.

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