



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. SULTAN AL-MAHMOUD, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE STATE OF QATAR TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 44: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPMENT; AND AGENDA ITEM 92(A): TRAINING AND RESEARCH: UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH, SECOND COMMITTEE, FIFTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 16 November 2004)

Mr. Chairman

Thank you for given me the opportunity to make this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 44 under the title "Information and communication technology for development", and item 92(a) under the title "Training and research: United Nations Institute for Training and Research".

On item 44 - Information and communication technology for development

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China reaffirms the potential of Information and Communication Technologies as a powerful tools to foster socio-economic development and contribute to the realisation of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration and would like in this regard to renew its acknowledgement with gratitude for the generous offer of Tunisia to host the second phase of the Summit, which will take place in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005.

The Group of 77 and China urges all Member States, relevant United Nations bodies, including the ICT Task Force and other intergovernmental organisations, non-governmental organisations, civil society and the private sector to contribute to the preparatory process of the Tunis phase of the Summit as well as to the Summit itself in order to ensure its overall success.

The Group of 77 and China extend their support to the draft resolution submitted by Tunisia and Switzerland which constitutes the agreed outcome of consultations undertaken with all interested member countries. In this regard, the Group of 77 takes note with satisfaction of the results and decisions of the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee, held in Hammamet (Tunisia) from 24-26 June 2004, concerning the structure and output of the second phase of the Summit and reiterates its call to the international community to make voluntary contributions to the special fund established by the International Telecommunication Union to support the preparations for and holding of the Summit.

On item 92(a) – Training and research: United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Mr. Chairman,

The Group is pleased to note that UNITAR has fully regained its position within the United Nations and that its training and capacity building programmes have been consolidated. In fulfilling its mandate, the Institute now provides training for personnel from both the developed and developing countries. Indeed, in the period under review, UNITAR recorded a significant increase from 6,000 to 7,800 in the number of persons who benefited from its seminars, workshops and conferences.

The growing popularity of the training activities of the Institute measured in terms of the number and diversity of the participants in its programmes lead to one conclusion: that the United Nations Institute for Training and Research is a useful body, which is providing a useful service to Member States. Not only are the programmes diversified, but also, they take place in different parts of the world and some of them are tailor-made to suit the requirements of beneficiaries. In this regard, the Group of 77 and China, notes with appreciation, the partnership approach in implementing fellowship programmes and hopes that the focal areas would be broadened to include other relevant core development issues of interest to developing countries.

With regard to training activities in New York, while the G77 and China commends UNITAR for the quality of its programmes, the Group is of the view that the Institute should find ways to better maximize the use of time to achieve effectiveness and to shorten the time allotted for some of its activities especially during major events in New York. Participants from developing countries are often constrained on account of time factor not to avail of some

programme and training activities. The institute should endeavor to find a way around the practice of organizing day-long activities that present participants with difficult choices to make with regard to time management.

Mr. Chairman,

We note with concern, that although the financial situation of the Institute has become a less urgent issue, due to the stable contributions to and performance of special purpose grants, contributions to the general fund remain precariously low. This unacceptable situation severely inhibits the capacity of the Institute to render more service to Member States, particularly developing countries. In fact, the Secretary General has indicated in his report A/59/230 that the future of some of the programmes offered by UNITAR, free of charge to diplomats and delegates from all nations is in jeopardy. Against this background, it is self-evident that for the Institute to offer more and better services, its funding must increase and should come from diverse sources. Emphasis should also shift from special purpose grants to the general fund. We therefore urge Member States, especially donor countries that are yet to do so, to either resume or increase their contributions to UNITAR without further delay.

Another issue that requires expeditious attention is the lingering problem of the rental and management costs of the premises used by UNITAR. It would be necessary for this matter to be resolved to enable the Institute to channel its resources to its training activities. We look forward to working with our partners to resolve this issue once and for all.

I thank you.