

Statement by Ambassador Milos Alcalay, Permanent Representative of Venezuela to the United Nations and Chairman of the Group of 77, before the Second Preparatory Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development acting as the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development

New York, 31 January 2002

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me, at the outset, to express, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, our most sincere appreciation for the work being developed by the Bureau under your guidance. Almost ten months have passed since the organizational session and these arduous working and talented people have been doing a great job in paving our road to Johannesburg. Your long experience and work in the field of sustainable development, Mr. Chairman, has been fundamental to give the tone for these lengthy and serious preparations which will, at the end of the day, assure the best possible outcome.

Mr. Chairman,

Since last April the developing countries have been able to develop a much better understanding of what has happened since Rio as far as the achievement of sustainable development is concerned. The Secretariat, which we wholeheartedly thank, has provided us with important information on the state of the world in sustainability terms; national, sub-regional and regional meetings have taken place worldwide to discuss priorities for the Ten Year Review of the Rio Conference; and, finally, G-77 countries have informally discussed, with our partners and among ourselves, our views and hopes towards the implementation of Agenda 21, as well as the challenges ahead of us.

The Group of 77 and China intends to consolidate our inputs to the process in a written document, a preliminary position document, now being prepared. It is our hope to deliver this document to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the Bureau, as soon as possible, maybe even by the end of this week. The paper will be a guideline to our thoughts on the issues at hand and it will be in a process of constant updating. The position document will certainly be the most important collective contribution of the developing world to the preparatory process of the WSSD.

Mr. Chairman,

The various regions of the world have had, in the last ten months, the unique chance to meet and discuss the issues pertaining to the implementation of Agenda 21 according to their regional priorities. We had the opportunity to listen to the various presentations of results last Monday in this august Forum. From Phnom Penh to Nairobi, from Singapore to Rio, the details may differ but the message is one: developing countries encounter similar difficulties in implementing Agenda 21 and the Programme for Further Implementation of Agenda 21 no matter where they are.

We have concluded that Agenda 21 has been implemented unevenly, that many commitments regarding means of implementation have not yet been met and that developed countries have tended to ignore the development aspects of Agenda 21. We believe that the Summit should make the review on the implementation of Agenda 21 in an approach that links sectorial issues with cross-sectorial ones, and the Group has a concrete propose in this respect.

The constraints developing countries have been encountering to implement Agenda 21 are of several types: the financial resources are not forthcoming, technology transfer has never really been properly implemented

and capacity building, one feels, exists only in theory. Regional conflict, foreign occupation, economic sanctions, instability and the absence of peace and security impede the achievement of economic and social development, and negatively impact the environment.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, our conclusion is that the Summit should focus on implementation, on action, on concrete proposals and time bound measures. The renewal of commitments with a focus on action should be one of the outcomes of Johannesburg. Many names have been given to a final Johannesburg agreement involving developed and developing countries that will revive and help implement the Rio Principles and Agenda 21. The Group believes that a name is not important for us right now, but that we should focus it. It is with this conviction that the group will present its comments and remarks.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China thanks the Secretary General for presenting this Report on Implementing Agenda 21. We believe the analysis made is a contribution to the debate we are going to have prior and during the Johannesburg Summit.

At the same time, we feel that examination discussion of the main issues has not been totally completed, and that some further analyses, for the International Community, in particular the role of developed countries in achieving the goals contained in Agenda 21 is required.

Consideration in subjects such as, forest (not only tropical forest), energy, desertification, oceans, natural disaster, the situation of Least Developed Countries (LDC) and Small Island Developing States, trade, mountains, and the problems of fresh water, should be given.

Mr. Chairman

With those short preliminary remarks, Mr. Chairman, the Group of 77 and China would like to state its position on the proposed issues on section VIII of the Report. Again, allow me to thank the secretariat for trying to give some order on the discussions of issues by taking into account the inputs from the various regional meetings. For easier reference, the Group has decided to keep, whenever possible, the headings and the placement suggested in the document. There were some cases, though, when it was not possible to keep the initial formulation and the Group has proposed modifications which, we believe, will facilitate the conduction of our discussions. We will also discuss prioritization of themes

The headings proposed by the Group of 77 and China are as follows:

- Making globalization work for sustainable development;
- Poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods;
- Changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production;
- Promoting health through sustainable development;
- Conservation and management of resources for development;
- Means of implementation;
- Sustainable development initiatives for Africa;
- Strengthening the system of international governance for sustainable development.

Concerning the item entitled “Conservation and management of resources for development”, the Group feels it is more inclusive and can accommodate the various issues considered important by member countries. The list of issues is, by no means, final, but gives a clear indication on the way the thoughts of developing

countries are directed right now:

- Atmosphere; energy; fresh water; oceans; desertification; land management; ecosystems, including forests; vulnerability, natural disasters and minerals and mining.

Finally, regarding the means of implementation, G-77 feels that the issue should be tackled in amore holistic manner; finances, technology transfer and capacity building are integral and indivisible tools to achieve sustainable development and should not be dealt with. Therefore, our proposal is that “Means of Implementation “ be discussed under each and every item of the accepted themes and be a theme by itself.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China is looking forward for our discussions next week.

Thank you Mr. Chairman