

Statement by Ambassador Bagher Asadi, Chairman of the Group of 77 (Islamic Republic of Iran), at the Second Committee of the General Assembly on agenda item 12: Report of the Economic and Social Council

New York, 19 November 2001

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me at the outset to express, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the five-year assessment of the progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/225 on public administration and development. I would also like to thank the Secretariat for the preliminary version of the report of the Economic and Social Council for 2001. During the course of the year we have had very fruitful meetings and discussions in the Council and I could say that it has made a good progress in discharging its mandate as enunciated in the United Nations Charter. Nonetheless, there is still room for improvement and promotion of coordination within the United Nations system. Mr. Chairman,

In this somehow short statement I will be very practical and down to the point. Let me start with the high-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods Institutions. It is a good initiative and generally served the intended purpose. It has nevertheless been felt that this rather unique annual opportunity with the presence of the Secretary-General and heads of BWIs, and ILO and United Nations funds and programmes and high-level representatives of states should be better utilized to engage in a substantive dialogue and interaction, which would, inter alia, contribute to the discussions and deliberations in these various international and multilateral bodies and organizations. Such a wide participation would ensure that different perspectives and approaches are present, allowing for a more wide-ranging and richer exchange of views and a more comprehensive understanding of how to address global challenges, particularly those with serious impact on developing countries both at international and national levels. Here, I should seize the moment to thank the Secretariat and the Bureau of ECOSOC for being more innovative this year on the format of this meeting. Round-tables proved very useful and gave the opportunity to all participants to be substantially engaged in the deliberations and discussions. The Group of 77 and China believes that there still exists tremendous opportunity for extending the participation of other multilateral institutions and organizations in such dialogues and there is still room for improving the format, outcome and follow-up of such meetings.

Turning to the substantive session of ECOSOC, let me say that we had very good deliberations on some of the segments; namely, high-level, coordination and operational activities segments - in which the good and timely preparation of documentation played an important catalytic role. In the high-level segment, which was focused on the role of the United Nations in supporting the efforts of African countries to achieve sustainable development, the format of the various meetings was quite interesting. The African forum for investment promotion and its three round-tables on investment climate in African countries, financing of investment, and infrastructure needs, were extremely useful and contributed extensively to this segment. Panel of eminent personalities on the theme "The nexus between peace and development" also provided a deep insight into the serious challenges and sad events in Africa in particular domestic conflicts. The high-level representation in the ministerial discussion of this segment, their substantive participation in the debate and the excellent declaration of the segment - thanks to the hard substantive work of the President of the Council - constitute a very rich outcome and a valuable contribution of the United Nations system to the various aspects of the sustainable development in Africa. This good work and outcome deserves to be acknowledged and appreciated.

As for the operational activities segment, we all remember the rich and wide-ranging discussions on all aspects of these activities. We are very happy that our collective discussions then have made an outstanding

contribution to the preparation of an excellent report we have before us here on the Triennial Policy Review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. The agreed conclusion of the coordination segment on “The role of the United Nations in promoting development , particularly with respect to access to and transfer of knowledge and technology, especially information and communication technologies, inter alia, through partnership with relevant stakeholders, including the private sector” was also a substantive and rich outcome for this segment. We hope – and expect - that this outcome will provide the necessary guidelines for the relevant bodies within the United Nations system to be actively involved in the mainstreaming the issue of transfer of knowledge and technology, especially information and communication technologies, in the system. Mr. Chairman,

Now, let me turn to the two other segments; that is, humanitarian affairs segment and general segment. As everybody remembers, substantive discussion on humanitarian segment and some items in the general segment faced serious difficulty because of late preparation and distribution of the relevant documents. It is true that in the humanitarian segment we had an excellent summary of the Vice-President and two panel discussion on “natural disaster preparedness and response measures” and “emergency assistance to groups with special needs”. Nevertheless, the Group of 77 and China had the clear preference for a negotiated outcome for this segment which could help us guide and coordinate better the relevant bodies and organization active in this field within the United Nations system. Also in the general segment late preparation and distribution of necessary documents created a very difficult situation for delegations in preparing their national as well as their group positions. Such a situation did in fact constrain our progress on some of the issues and also led to the late submission of draft resolutions. Moreover, late presentation of some of the draft decisions which we simply had not discussed left us with no other option but to defer their consideration to the resumed session of ECOSOC. We are, of course, cognizant of the constraints the Secretariat and the Bureau of the Council face and we appreciate their endeavors to overcome these constraints. At the same time we believe it is necessary to raise these concerns here. They simply cannot be allowed to continue. The Group of 77 and China also believes that the functional commissions, regional commissions, relevant committees and expert groups can facilitate the work in the general segment of ECOSOC through comprehensive consideration of items in their agendas and working on broad-based consensus that could take into consideration the positions and views of all Member States. Such an approach and understanding could help us save resources and prevent unnecessary discussion and negotiation of the outcome at other levels.

Mr. Chairman,

Finally, let me add a brief word on the issue of public administration and development. Here again, time shortage, compounded by other technical problems, prevented us from discussing this item during the substantive session of ECOSOC. We have, of course, addressed the relevant report within the Group and acknowledge that it is an issue of strong interest to some quarters. We look forward to the upcoming resumed session of ECOSOC and hope that we could have fruitful discussions and a proper outcome for this agenda item.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.