

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR BAGHER ASADI, CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77 (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN), AT THE SECOND MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OPEN-ENDED INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ESTABLISHED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ITS RESOLUTION 54/33 IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THE ANNUAL REVIEW BY THE ASSEMBLY OF DEVELOPMENTS IN OCEAN AFFAIRS**

**New York, 7 May 2001**

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Mr. Co-chair,

It is indeed a pleasure for me to present the general views of the Group 77 and China on the agenda items under consideration. We consider the work of this consultative process important. We are fully prepared to actively engage in this week's deliberations and contribute, in a constructive manner, to a consensual agreement. You can rely on us for all your good efforts to this end.

Mr. Co-chair,

At the very outset, let me reiterate, once again, our position of principle that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. The strategic importance of the Convention as the basis of actions at all levels in the marine sector hardly needs to be emphasized. We firmly believe that the integrity of the Convention should be maintained. This point has been clearly - and rightly - underlined in relevant General Assembly resolutions 54/33 and 55/7.

Let me say, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, that we are very grateful to the distinguished Co-chairs and the Secretariat for preparing the document A/AC.259/L.2, which, in our view, provides a good basis for our deliberations. The present statement will be very practical; the message we are putting across is quite clear, equally so are our priorities and concerns. Before turning to the document before us, let me just say that we are very happy to see that agreement was reached this morning on the composition of the report.

On the discussion of part I in Panel A, there is a need for identification of needs of developing countries in achieving the objective of sustainable development in the area of marine science and technology. This is in line with the provisions of resolution 55/7 in Annex II, paragraph 1 and Decision 7/1 of the Commission on Sustainable Development. We note with great interest the Secretary-General's report (Paragraph 547) on the study carried out and received by the Third UNCLOS. In fact, we propose to have that report presented to the next meeting of this process as a background document. The G-77 and China is of the view that marine science and technology and capacity building within the context of sustainable development deserve particular consideration, especially when discussed within the framework of international cooperation. For developing countries with different national circumstances and a wide range of development plans, access to the means of implementation is of vital importance. If there is a will to move - which seems to be the case - we should first convince ourselves that we are on the right track. Fortunately, the Secretary-General in his report refers to some possible measures to address the problem. He draws attention to the fact that many countries, especially developing countries, need to work on awareness raising in the overall development potential of the maritime sectors. His emphasis on the scarcity of international financial resources in developing countries is a welcome assertion. The Secretary-General considers - and rightly so - that the acquisition of new technologies by most developing countries is beyond their capabilities. While expressing gratitude to the Secretary-General for his very perceptive and indicative approach in this regard, I would like to state that we will present our detailed viewpoints later on.

The Group of 77 and China takes this opportunity to highlight some of the major issues in the area of marine

science and technology and capacity building from the perspective of the developing world. Lack of technical, financial and technological and institutional capacity in developing countries to effectively tackle the catastrophes and threats to oceans and seas ecology is among the main constraints they face and whose removal calls for effective international cooperation. Worse still, these countries, generally speaking, even suffer from lack of or insufficient access to the results of marine scientific research. I suppose it is understood that such a cooperation would be undertaken with full respect for the sovereignty of each state involved.

The Group of 77 and China considers the following domains of utmost important in the discussions of Panel A and any conclusion thereof:

- Interaction of oceans and atmosphere and its implication on climate change;
- pollution in oceans and seas and their impacts on fresh water resources;
- impacts of pollution in fragile ecosystems including closed and semi closed seas;
- the role of fisheries in socio- economic welfare of developing countries;
- ways of controlling and preventing unsustainable fisheries;
- ballast water and its impacts on marine environment;
- dumping of wastes;
- hazardous waste;
- radioactive and chemical wastes in oceans and seas;
- dismantlement of ships;
- marine pollution in coastal areas and its effects on agriculture and fresh water;
- crisis management in emergency situation;
- necessity of carrying out EIA for implementation of projects potentially considered dangerous in fragile marine environment.

In this regard, the Group of 77 and China would like to propose the following:

- Strengthening coordination at international level as well as interagency level with the aim of avoiding duplication and streamlining the activities in different fora;
- Strengthening the regional organizations of UNEP regional Seas Programme through further cooperation of relevant international organizations with them;
- Establishment of centers for dissemination of information on marine scientific research and technology;
- Strengthening GEF and other financial institutions enabling them to actively finance the capacity-building projects in developing countries;
- Identify the existing intergovernmental centers of excellence on marine science and technology in order to disseminate their information and the possibility of cooperation among them;
- Encouraging, at all levels, the steps necessary for an effective and coordinated implementation of the provisions of UNCLOS and Agenda 21, including institutional adjustments and improved coordination mechanism for Chapter 17 of Agenda 21 to support action at national and regional levels in developing countries and the provision of financial and technical assistance for the transfer of environmentally sound technologies. In this context, the international community should promote, facilitate and finance access to and transfer of environmentally sound technology and the corresponding know-how to developing countries on concessional and preferential terms.
- Inviting the international financial institutions, including GEF, to support implementation of projects in developing countries in the areas of:
  - controlling and reducing pollution in oceans and seas in particular in fragile ecosystems like closed and semi closed seas;
  - implementing coastal cities waste management and recycling projects;
  - preserving fresh water resources in coastal area from pollution;
  - controlling and reducing the pollution from shipping, dumping of wastes, hazardous, radioactive, as well as

chemical wastes and other harmful substances;

- carrying out EIA for potentially harmful projects to the marine environment;
- implementation of joint projects with regional organizations of UNEP Regional Sea Programme and with other relevant international organization;
- convening regional and international workshops aimed at better understanding gaps and constrains in preserving of marine environment.

From our point of view, it is extremely important to avoid any duplication of work in this process and engage in debates that fall beyond the mandate of this meeting. As we all know, this very point has been underlined in the GA resolution 55/7. With this in mind, the Group of 77 and China does not consider continental shelf and under water cultural heritage relevant to our discussions in this meeting.

On the Panel B discussion, while the Group recognizes the importance of the navigation safety and the imperative of respect for the jurisdiction of the coastal states, it is of the view that the provisions of UNCLOS remain the legal framework for our deliberations on this matter.

To conclude, Mr. Co-chair, let me reiterate, once again, our commitment to and sincere hope for a successful outcome of this meeting.

Thank you very much, Mr. Co-chair.