

STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77 AT THE SECOND SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

New York, 5 February 2001

Mr. Chairman,

At the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Committee for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the Group of 77 and China assured you of its total unequivocal support for the Conference. Today, at the very beginning of the second preparatory meeting, I would like to once again reiterate our solidarity with the Least Developed Countries, an important part and parcel of the developing community. The Group of 77 and China will remain fully engaged in this undertaking and will spare no effort in working in close cooperation with all the stakeholders and parties concerned towards the success of this process. And in the same breadth, I should seize the opportunity to renew to you, Mr. Chairman, and to all the distinguished members of the Bureau, our full support throughout the process ahead of us. I should as well express, on behalf of the Group, our deep appreciation to UNCTAD Secretariat and colleagues for all their invaluable contribution, substantive and otherwise, to this process.

As we all remember well, in the first preparatory meeting back in September, the statement of the Group of 77 dealt with the predicament of the LDCs in detail, with particular emphasis, among others, on the further deterioration of their overall situation, unfortunate increase in number and further marginalization as a result of the still on-going globalization. Today, I do not intend to repeat what is already stated and discussed. Nor do I find particularly amusing or convincing the mere recourse to a long catalogue of facts and figures - sobering and even alarming as they certainly are. And, of course, I have in mind your injunction at the Bureau meeting last Thursday to be as brief as possible. Therefore, what, instead, is needed at this stage of our work is to take a step beyond the statement of the problematic and focus our collective attention on two concrete tasks. One, to work towards achieving consensus on a global compact for the LDCs, and two, to lend ourselves, all of us in the international community, to action and implementation of our agreements at the end of the process. For this we have the draft Programme of Action.

In devising the fundamentals of the needed global partnership for and with the LDCs, and equally so in the formulation of the provisions of the Programme of Action, a critical hindsight is an absolute necessity. We all need to take stock, with honesty and objectivity, of the past experiences, and take it upon ourselves to build a solid foundation for future without illusion or unrealism, albeit with vision and determination.

Mr. Chairman,

Turning to the draft Programme of Action before us, let me say at the very outset, that it represents a positive movement forward in an on-going process. In a general sense, it has addressed all the genuine and legitimate concerns and interests of the LDC community and provided us with a balanced and comprehensive basis for our work in the weeks and months ahead of us. We consider that the draft has endeavoured to respond, in its totality and in an objective manner, to the views that have been expressed previously by the concerned parties. The balance achieved in the draft between the responsibilities of the LDCs and their development partners as well as between the social and economic objectives of development deserves to be supported. In our view, the framework envisioned in the draft for practical and effective follow-up and implementation is a sound basis for further consideration and deserves to be discussed with due attention and diligence.

Mr. Chairman,

As underlined a few moments ago, this statement, brief as it is, will not engage in providing specific commentary either on various parts of the draft nor on any particular provision or proposal. Rather, the main thrust of our intervention at this stage is to draw attention to the following as the fundamental elements of an overall approach we believe to be imperative for the success of the process and the subsequent effective follow-up and implementation of its final outcome.

- Necessity of active participation of all stakeholders, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental throughout the entire process;
- Imperative of achieving consensus on an integrated, focused and action-oriented Programme of Action with specific time-bound targets and clear division of responsibility;
- Imperative of mustering requisite political will on the part of all the stakeholders to work towards ensuring effective realization of international cooperation for development in the implementation of the outcome of the process;
- Necessity of urgent action by the entire international community to address the development needs of the LDC community as a matter of priority; and
- Imperative of establishment of effective follow-up and implementation mechanisms.

Mr. Chairman,

To conclude, let me just add that the current process should provide us; that is, the entire international community, with yet another opportunity to decide on a set of much needed policies and actions, act on them with urgency and resolve, and in one word, try to do things differently for the weakest part of the human community.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.