



STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. AZIZ PAHAD, DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, ON BEHALF OF GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, TO THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE COORDINATING BUREAU OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT (Putrajaya, Malaysia, 29 May 2006)

Hon Prime Minister Dato Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Prime Minister of Malaysia;
Hon Deputy Prime Minister Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Abdul Razak;
Hon Syed Hamid Albar, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia;
Ministers of Foreign Affairs;
Distinguished Guests;
Excellencies,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, allow me to express our deepest appreciation to the Government and people of Malaysia for hosting this important meeting at a very critical and challenging time facing all humanity.

At the Millennium Summit in September 2000, the Heads of State and Government declared that central challenge we face "is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people. For while globalization offers great opportunities, at present its benefits are very unevenly shared, while its costs are unevenly distributed."

Six years later, the global situation has not changed and millions of people are still living below the poverty line. The imbalance in the decision and policy making processes of the global trade, economic and financial institutions continue to weaken the world's response to poverty and underdevelopment. Many developing countries, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa, will not meet the Millennium Development Goals we set ourselves just a few years ago.

Of even greater concern is that the multilateral system that allows us to respond collectively to these challenges is itself under threat. This makes it more important than ever, that the Group 77 and China and the Non-Aligned Movement should work together in defending the multilateral system; fighting poverty and underdevelopment; maintaining peace and stability; and restructuring the global exercise of economic and political power.

We can only make progress if we strengthen the role, capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations and improve its performances in order for it to realize its full potential in accordance with the purpose and principles of the Charter.

The Group of 77 and China supports the proposals of the Secretary-General that will help strengthen the ability of the United Nations to implement its mandates and effectively deliver on all its programmes. We are committed to working with the Secretary-general and the President of the General assembly to achieve the reform of the United Nations within the inter-governmental framework that the Organization provides. We believe that the reform should be meaningful, strengthen the ability of the Organization to implement its mandates effectively and enable it to serve the interests of the collective membership. A stronger United Nations that responds more effectively to our collective needs is in our common interest.

Furthermore, the Group of 77 and China remains committed to the implementation of all the outcomes of all the major UN conferences and summits, including the 2005 World Summit Outcome. We attach high importance to the full implementation of commitments, in particular those in the economic, social and related fields. It is for this reason that we remain concerned at the slow progress in the implementation of the 2005 World Summit Outcome decisions, in particular those regarding development and the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council.

The biggest challenge for the United Nations has been the spending cap that has been imposed on the Secretary-General in carrying out his duties. We regret the exceptional and unprecedented measure of restricting the expenditures of the Organization by authorizing the Secretary-General only to enter into expenditures limited to fifty per cent of the approved budget for 2006. To avoid a crisis within the UN and in its operational activities around the world, the Group of 77 and China expects that the spending cap will be automatically lifted at the end of June 2006 when the Secretary-General requests more resources to fulfill his mandate.

Developing countries have always insisted that the Secretary-General should receive adequate, predictable and uninterrupted resources to undertake effectively the work of the Organization. The financial stability of the United Nations must not be jeopardized.

On Secretariat and Management Reform, the Group of 77 and China has supported reforms adopted so far by the General Assembly, including increasing the investigation capacity of the Office of Internal Oversight Services; the creation of a UN ethics office; and the development of a whistle-blower policy. We initiated some of these reforms, including the request for a report on the review of the procurement policies, because of our desire for a stronger United Nations.

The Group of 77 and China remains ready to engage constructively with other Member States in an open, transparent and inclusive manner, to achieve the necessary reforms to the United Nations as mandated by the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

A stronger and more efficient United Nations is the only hope for addressing the global challenges we face. And as the Group of 77 and China declared in the Second South Summit Doha Plan of Action “unity and solidarity among countries of the South is an indispensable element in the defense of our right to development and for the creation of a more just and equitable international order and for preserving and nurturing the policy space necessary for developing countries to pursue their development objectives.”

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Malaysia for their excellent chairmanship of the NAM and welcome Cuba as the incoming Chair.

In conclusion, allow me Chairperson on behalf of the Group of 77 and China to express our condolences to the Government and the people of Indonesia for the earthquake tragedy that claimed many lives in the Java Province.

I thank you.

