



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DUMISANI KUMALO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, BEFORE THE SECOND COMMITTEE ON AGENDA ITEM 53: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (New York, 25 October 2006)

Madame Chairperson,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

1. I wish to take the floor on behalf of the Group of 77 and China under agenda item 53, (a): Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, (b): Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, (c): International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, (d): Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind, (e): Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, (f): Convention on Biological Diversity, (g): Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its ninth special session.

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development

2. At the outset, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, let me thank the UN Secretary General for the comprehensive reports submitted on agenda item 53.

3. Human-induced activities, particularly in recent decades, are putting unprecedented strain on ecosystems. The ability of the planet's ecosystems to sustain future generations must be ensured. The stakes are high for the entire world and it is important to involve all stakeholders in efforts towards sustainable development. The United Nations and the international community have successfully declared a variety of commitments and formulated time bound goals and targets in the arena of sustainable development. The full and speedy implementation of these agreements is key.

4. As His Excellency, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Chairman of the Group of 77 and China stressed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2002, and I quote, "the obligation we all face to respond with all seriousness and with a sense of urgency to adopt a meaningful Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, is in the interests of all humanity and our common planet." The World Summit on Sustainable Development has put sustainable development and the environment back on the public and political agendas when globalization, while offering chances for development, continues, at the moment, in deepening inequalities between the poor and the rich. It is vital to abide by principles requiring those who consumed natural resources or polluted the environment to pay appropriately for their actions.

5. The sphere of sustainable development under Agenda 21 covers a wide range of topics including energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air/atmospheric pollution, and climate change. The gap between developing and developed countries in the realm of environmentally sound technologies continues to grow as developed countries continuously further their research and development efforts in an isolated manner.

6. The Group of 77 and China calls on developed countries to cooperate with countries of the South in research and development in order to facilitate the transfer of appropriate and advanced technology that may help improve technology access for the poor, and the capacity of developing countries to further develop environmentally sound technology.

7. We highlight the importance of developing specific approaches to technology transfer and technological and scientific cooperation to address the prioritized needs of countries in energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air /atmospheric pollution, and climate change.

8. The Group of 77 and China reaffirms its belief that numerous commitments to sustainable development and action oriented strategies are meaningless without reliable means to implement them. The necessary means include among other things a scaling up of ODA as well as access to appropriate advanced environmentally-friendly technologies. It is essential that countries of the North provide financial resources and support for the countries of the South in their

efforts to achieve sustainable development.

9. The programme of work must exhibit not only predictability, but flexibility to reflect the true nature of the relationships between issues and relevant means of implementation, highlighting the various responsibilities of the different actors and their levels of involvement in the implementation process. In this context, we would like to reaffirm that while the primary focus of the implementation remains at the national level, it must be recognized that the Johannesburg Declaration and the Plan of Implementation emphasized commitments to multilateralism and the need for strong support from the entire international community for the provision of the necessary means for successful implementation of the various commitments.

10. The Group of 77 and China remains convinced that it is only through an effective and accountable process of implementation of the specific goals and time-bound targets that we can, together, translate sustainable development objectives from abstract concepts to reality. Our Group is looking forward to the forthcoming Fifteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and its Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting which will deal with the four issues of high importance to us: air/atmospheric pollution, climate change, energy for sustainable development and industrial development. We would like to reiterate that CSD-11 Resolution 1 paragraph 10 (a) adopted in May 2003 decided that the implementation of the multi-year programme of work will take into account the fact that "all the issues identified in Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation are important" and that "the implementation process should cover all those issues equally". It is therefore necessary that both the organization of the work of the IPM and the CSD-15 reflect this decision accordingly.

11. CSD-15 will be a negotiating year which will decide on policy options and possible actions to address the constraints and obstacles identified in the review year with regards to the four issues under the thematic cluster. It will have as a starting point the Chair's negotiating document which is based on the review year and the IPM discussions held two months before. Our Group therefore considers it necessary with regard to the forthcoming session, to have enough time allocated for negotiations, and that the Chair's negotiating document should be submitted to delegations no later than at the beginning of the session in order to allow delegations sufficient time to analyze and coordinate their positions.

Madame Chairperson,
Your Excellencies,
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(b): Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

12. For effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, the presence of strong political will and national ownership at each country level is vital. The importance of international support and frameworks can not be neglected and the need to enhance regional support and partnerships must be continuously highlighted. The Group of 77 and China calls for the scaling up of resources available for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

13. Given the particular situation of islands, issues of biodiversity, climate change, disaster reduction and broader sustainable development are of large significance for small island developing states. The negative impact of factors such as climate change and loss of biodiversity threatens the livelihood of the indigenous people and local communities, impacts their access to good health and medicine, and affects their supply of drinkable fresh water and food.

14. It is the unfortunate fate of islands to be more exposed to changes, to be faced with greater challenges, and to have more limited means to address them. The Group of 77 and China calls on the international community to provide the necessary support and resources in order to translate the vulnerability into strength through creativity, resilience and leadership.

Madame Chairperson,
Your Excellencies,
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(c): International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

15. We note with concern that natural disasters are increasing in terms of both frequency and severity. We recall the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 and emphasize the full implementation of the provisions of the Framework aimed at building the resilience of nations and communities to disaster. In recent years, the world has witnessed a

growing number of natural disasters from floods to droughts and tsunamis to earthquakes. Due to rapid population growth, especially in urban areas, environmental degradation, growing poverty, the social and economic impacts of disasters have become greater and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction attempts to tackle the increasing impact of disasters in the world.

16. The problem posed by natural disasters is of crucial importance to developing countries. The adverse consequences on the affected populations and the environment as well as social and economic development of affected countries are a long lasting phenomenon. It is, therefore, important to examine the measures that need to be taken to improve the response capacity of affected nations and the assistance that can be provided by the international community in this regard.

17. The importance of community involvement should not be neglected and their active participation should be encouraged in order to gain greater insight into the individual and collective perception and understanding of development and risk, based on the cultural and other capabilities of each unique society. Every day, development decisions being made at local and international levels are more often increasing the vulnerability to hazards than reducing risk as the decisions are made without the context of the local situation.

18. The Group of 77 and China calls for developed countries to assist developing countries through support, the provision of resources, and capacity building in order to be better prepared for forthcoming natural disasters.

19. We also urge our development partners to help developing countries to set regulations which are appropriate, in order to materialize the five priority areas of the Hyogo Declaration. We further urge for financial support from developed countries to enhance national capacities of developing countries to build resilience of nations and communities.

20. We take note with satisfaction of the proposed Global Platform for Risk Reduction to be held in Geneva as mentioned in the Secretary General's report. The Group of 77 and China is ready to consider seriously this proposal due to the fact that preparedness and building the resilience of nations to disasters is very important for the developing world.

Madame Chairperson,
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(d): Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind

21. In the context of a rapidly globalizing world where protection from climate change is necessary the Group of 77 and China reaffirms the need to address the adverse effects of climate change, especially the adaptation needs of developing countries. In order for risk mitigation and effective adaptation, the countries of the South require enhanced capacity to implement commitments including the Kyoto Protocol and to benefit more from the Clean Development Mechanism. We also require the knowledge and know how necessary for the effective use of environmentally sound technologies.

22. The Kyoto Protocol though it imposes concrete and legally binding emission reduction targets on more than 30 industrialized countries, not all large industrialized nations of the North have ratified the agreement. Countries of the North have to step up their efforts to ensure effective implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. In this regard, it is essential that the industrialized nations fulfill their commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It is also significant that international cooperation be stepped up, including through the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol, which allows for emission reductions in the most cost effective manner and will be of crucial importance to supplement action at the national level.

23. The Group of 77 and China acknowledges the progress in this area and calls for a scaling up of resource mobilization in the following:

- " Increasing financial support to meet the full incremental cost of implementing all the technology needs in developing countries;
- " Disseminating information regarding existing EST;
- " Establishing concrete programs such as joint research, access to and development of technology;
- " Providing incentives to the private sectors in countries of the North to facilitate technology transfer;
- " Promotion of indigenous technologies; and
- " Promotion of North-South cooperation including the transfer of technologies

" Promotion of South-South cooperation.

Madame Chairperson,
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(e): Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

24. Desertification and land degradation in general continue to pose a threat to sustainable development. Human factors such as overgrazing, deforestation, and overexploitation of land due to demographic pressure, compounded with climate change, are turning once fertile soils into unproductive and barren patches of lands. Poverty is widespread in those areas. Four years ago, in Johannesburg, the World leaders agreed to consider the Convention to Combat Desertification as one of the important tools for poverty eradication. Yet, the international community continues to shy away from providing enough attention to desertification and land degradation. This is a matter of concern for the Group of 77 and China. The Group regrets that even the Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization does not pay a single attention to this major problem. It is our hope that the international community will pay more focus on desertification as a priority issue for its impact on the survival of hundreds of millions of peoples is at stake.

25. Recognizing that 2006 is a significant year in the life of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification as the General Assembly has designated it The International year of Deserts and Desertification, the Group of 77 and China finds this to be an opportune moment to pay attention to this fundamental question of opportunities in the drylands.

26. The poor management of land resources is often exacerbated by the very vulnerability of the land itself and by the adverse impact of climate change and the biodiversity on which it depends. Results oriented efforts need to be strengthened in order to mitigate the risks of desertification and serious droughts from poor land management, as well as the impact of climate change and loss of biodiversity.

27. We reaffirm what the Conference of the Parties stressed in their seventh session that there is an urgent need for strategic guidance and targets in order to foster the implementation of the Convention. The UN Secretary General's report on Desertification stresses the need to, and I quote, "engage the international community in setting benchmarks and defining indicators for progress, and to make the Convention a centre for excellence in scientific and technical knowledge and practices" (A/61/225 Para 7).

28. The crucial element of resource mobilization in the success of the Convention must be addressed. The affected developing countries need support in capacity building to gain more access to financial resources and technology transfer. The Group of 77 and China reaffirms its support for the Global Environment Facility as the financial mechanism for the Convention and we reiterate our request for the GEF and its implementing agencies to work with the countries concerned to build capacity to facilitate ease of access to GEF funding and avoid complexities and conditionalities involved in accessing these funds. It is clear that complying with the Convention would support developing countries' efforts in eradicating poverty.

Madame Chairperson,
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(f) Convention on Biological Diversity

29. The Group of 77 and China attaches the highest importance to the speedy and balanced implementation in a mutually supportive manner of the three objectives of the Convention on biological diversity. Indeed conservation, of biological diversity cannot be achieved without the sustainable use and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefit arising from genetic resources. It is for this reason that 131 countries out of the 188 Parties to the convention on biological diversity are members of the Group of 77. Biodiversity is key to the development of developing countries.

30. The Group of 77 and China welcomes the new enhanced phase of implementation of the Convention arising from the decisions adopted at the third meeting of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the eight meeting of the Conference of the Parties held in Curitiba, Brazil. The Group of 77 and China welcomes the decisions adopted in Curitiba and especially the decision to finalize no later than 2010 the negotiation on the international regime on

access and benefit sharing. To this end, the Group of 77 and China expresses its full support to the recommendation addressed to the present session of the General Assembly to declare 2010 as the International Biodiversity Year.

31. The Group of 77 and China would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Dr Ahmed Djoghlaif for his appointment as the new Executive Secretary and assure him of our full support and cooperation in the fulfillment of his heavy responsibility. The Group of 77 and China would like also to express its deep appreciation of the Executive Secretary for his prompt response to its request to prepare a multi year plan of action on South-South cooperation for the implementation of the convention.

32. Indeed, to benefit from their respective experience in promoting the sustainable use of biodiversity and ensuring that biodiversity will continue to contribute to their individual and collective long term development, we took the initiative of suggesting a long term plan of action among developing countries for the implementation of the three objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

33. To this end, we welcome the convening of a meeting of a group of experts to prepare, in the context of the Caracas Plan of Action on South-South Cooperation, a four year work plan to promote South-South cooperation. The plan will be submitted for adoption by the next meeting of the Conference of the Parties to be held in Germany in 2008 and the Group of 77 and China would like to request the Executive Secretary to submit a progress report on the implementation of this major initiative to the next session of the General Assembly. Indeed South-South cooperation is a key modality whose time has come for enhancing the implementation of this vital convention at the service of the legitimate development needs of the developing countries.

Madame Chairperson,
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(g) Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its ninth special session

34. The Group of 77 and China would like to express its support for UNEP's Governing Council and for the decisions adopted at its ninth special session. We welcome the adoption of the strategic approach to International Chemicals Management, and we look forward to its implementation. With the Bali Strategic Plan beginning with its pilot phase in 6 African countries, the Group of 77 and China calls on the international community to provide the necessary means through financial support as well as cooperation between Governments, all relevant international institutions, civil society and the private sector. It is also important to include in this pilot phase developing countries of Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

I thank you.