



STATEMENT BY H. E. MR. AHMAD BIN ABDULLAH AL-MAHMOUD, MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MEMBER OF THE CABINET STATE OF QATAR, BEFORE THE TURNOVER CEREMONY OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE GROUP OF 77 (New York, 16 January 2004)

In the name of Allah most merciful
most compassionate

Your Excellency, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation in the Kingdom of Morocco,
Your Excellency the Secretary General of the United Nations,
Your Excellency the Executive Director of the United Nations Program for Development (UNDP),
Your Excellencies the Permanent Representatives at the United Nations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

al-Salam Alikum wa Rahmat Allah wa Barkatuh,
(Peace and blessing of Allah be upon you)

At the outset, I would like to extend my thanks to all the member states in our Group for the trust they have placed in my country, the State of Qatar, by electing it to chair the Group of 77 and China for this year.

We value this trust and appreciate the heavy responsibilities that this entails, but we would like to assure you that the State of Qatar will exert its utmost to promote decisively and realistically the common interests of our Group in a manner commensurate with what the year 2004 requires from us before the international community.

It gives me great pleasure to convey my thanks to H.E. Mr. Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations, for his participation in this ceremony, and the understanding and cooperation he has shown vis-à-vis our group since he assumed his high office. I would also like to extend my thanks to H.E. Mr. Mark Mallock Brown, the Executive Director of the UNDP. We look forward to their continuous support and commitment in order to promote the issues that interest the members of our group, namely achieving peace, development and facilitating trade in the world. I must not neglect to pay tribute to the constructive cooperation made by the UNCTAD in support of the work of the developing countries in the fields of international trade and development.

Our efforts will be just an extension the distinguished efforts undertaken by the sisterly Kingdom of Morocco during their chairmanship of the group in the past year. In this connection, I would like to commend the distinguished efforts of the Moroccan diplomatic corps, and to express to them on your behalf our full appreciation and gratitude for their efforts in the furthering the objectives of our group. In particular, I would like to thank H.E. Ambassador Mohammed Banuna, Permanent representative of the Kingdom of Morocco at the United Nations, and the members of the Moroccan mission in New York.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The developing and the Least developed countries are called upon today to stand together and strengthen their unity in the face of the tremendous challenges which impede their way to achieve their development goals and bring about the prosperity and well-being of their peoples. My country is pleased to affirm to you that it will work hard to achieve our common interests, through promoting and strengthening the work of the Group, depending in these efforts on the continuous support of all the member states of the group. We intend to formulate an agreed upon work program, which shall serve the interests of the Group as a whole and lay the foundations for the adoption of common and unified positions during the forthcoming intensive and complex negotiations with our partners in development from the developed countries.

The world is witnessing today major trends manifested in the acceleration of the pace of development, the globalization of the world economy, and the policies of economic liberalization and openness, all of which have led to unprecedented variations in international policies and relations. Furthermore, global economic development is not occurring in a fair or just manner. At a time when the rich industrial states have benefited fully from globalization and policies of economic liberalization and openness, we find on the other hand that the developing countries and particularly the least developed among them, have been deprived and marginalized. Furthermore, the world financial

markets have become capable of destabilizing the economies of the developing countries. What is particularly a source of grave concern for us, is the inability of the global financial system to address with new and emerging issues under this new world economic order.

Despite our recognition that some developing countries have benefited from the process of globalization, yet the great majority of developing countries, and the least developing countries, particularly African states, find great difficulty in complying with the terms, provisions and laws of free trade, and in competing with the overwhelming forces of world markets, a matter which has led to the decline of revenues from their exports, a decline in their income, and, thus their marginalization.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The State of Qatar intends under the leadership of H.H. Sheikh Hamad bin Kahlifa Al-Thani, throughout its chairmanship of the Group in 2004, to work closely with all the member states in the Group of 77 and China to create an enabling environment for achieving a global sustainable development that is fair to the developing countries. We intend to establish a proactive open-ended working group to follow up the implementation of the results and plan of actions of the United Nations major conferences and particularly those of the summit conferences, of Copenhagen, Havana, the Millennium, Brussels, Johannesburg, and Monterey.

The State of Qatar intends during its chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China to work with the member states of the Group to promote international cooperation with our partners in development from the countries of the North, the UN organization under the leadership of UNDP to alleviate the problems of external debt burdens, improve the terms of International trade, increase official development assistance (ODA), increase direct foreign investments, and engage stakeholders in the international community, and encourage the participation of non-governmental organization and the private sector as full partners in the process of formulating and implementing economic and development policies in the developing countries. Moreover, the issue of South-South cooperation is an important means to promote economic growth in developing countries, and a means of safeguarding the full participation of these countries in the world economy, in a collective and effective manner.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the conference of the World Trade Organization held in Doha on the 1st of November 2001, we managed to reach by consensus a program of action that has put the needs of the developing countries, for the very first time, in the center of the multilateral trade negotiations. The Doha round of talks on development, declared that development constitutes the core of the agenda of the World Trade Organization. My country with the member states of the group intend to pursue constructive negotiations with our partners in the countries of the North, to make the next round of trade talks more transparent, inclusive and democratic and to realize the gains we made in Doha.

My country which has continued to support and show its solidarity with developing countries, and particularly the least developed countries intends during its chairmanship of the Group to promote the efforts of the coordinating office to implement the program of action of the Brussels Conference on least developing countries.

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The high-level conference on financing for development held in Monterey constitutes a major milestone, as it gave the developing countries a say in the decision making process in global economy. Moreover, this conference restored to the United Nations its lead and effective role in issues of global economy, as well as in the coordination of comprehensive development policies, and in achieving a fair distribution of the benefits of globalization.

Despite the fact, the Johannesburg Summit did not respond to all the expectations and aspirations of the developing countries, yet it underlined that sustainable development is the collective responsibility of the international community. It pleases us to cooperate with the Working Committee on the comprehensive and coordinated follow up of all the major United Nations conferences, among which is the Johannesburg Summit. We shall pay special attention to the issue of the environment and sustainable development. We intend also to establish a working group from among the member states of the Group of 77 and China to follow up the issues on the agenda of the Committee on Sustainable development.

We welcome all initiatives on the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). We intend to seek the support of Donor states and organizations, the private sector and civil society, for this new political framework for cooperation with Africa. We intend also to pay special attention to promoting initiatives aiming at removing the

causes of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction.

My country, emanating from its commitment to promote cooperation between South-South and South-North, as part and parcel of exchange relations among our countries has decided to hold an international conference on development in Doha from 16-17 February 2004, to discuss the issues of comprehensive development, and exchange views and ideas on the implementation of the development goals as well as to address the challenges they pose, with the view to establishing a stable and secure world order that will help us face the overriding issues of this era and achieve multi-faceted development.

In conclusion, I would like to assure the members of our group that the State of Qatar would spare no effort in seeking to achieve the goals that we shall agree to determine as our priorities for this year. We shall derive the necessary impetus to further the aspirations and interests of our group, from our common values of unity and solidarity. The strengthening of the capabilities of our group and our cohesiveness will continue to be our major preoccupation, so that we can play the role of the distinguished negotiator aiming at developing more cooperative, democratic and fair international economic relations.

Thank you.
Al-Salam Alikum Wa Rahmat Allah Wa Barkatuh.