



STATEMENT MADE BY JAMAICA ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA AT THE CLOSING OF THE 7TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD) DURING THE 13TH PLENARY MEETING (Nairobi, Kenya, 28 October 2005)

Mr. President
Mr. Executive Secretary
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

The Group of 77 and China wish to place on record some thoughts on the work of this seventh session of the Conference of the Parties.

Regional co-ordination units

We regret that this COP 7 found it impossible to recognise the role and functions of the RCUs once and for all, despite the fact that their establishment would promote South-South co-operation and could also result in savings for the Convention. We express our appreciation to the President of COP 7 for his bold initiative on the RCUs and thank fellow country Parties for supporting these activities. We intend to continue to push for their establishment for as long as we are able.

Joint Inspection Unit report

On a more positive note, we are pleased that the COP was able to take a decision regarding the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, which contains some excellent recommendations. We are looking forward to the outcome of the work of the inter-sessional working group to be established by the COP and hope that the nominees will strive to examine the report thoroughly and to co-operate in as professional and efficient a manner as possible.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Global Environment Facility

The Group of 77 and China are relieved that the COP was able to conclude and adopt the Memorandum of Understanding with the Council of the GEF, outlining the scope for the relationship between the two bodies. Of course, we are deeply disturbed by the absence of certain key elements in the MoU, which are necessary to elevate the relationship between the constituencies of the COP and the GEF.

We feel that these omissions are a reflection of the fact that, even after the acceptance of the GEF as a financial mechanism of the UNCCD, there seems to be a clear disconnection between the political stances taken at the highest level and actions at the technical level, particularly as regards GEF policies at the national level. The Group of 77 and China call on all country Parties to raise this issue at the highest political levels.

Programme and budget

The UNCCD is the Rio Convention that has the most direct impact on the lives of people, particularly those living in dryland areas all over the globe. We reiterate that the Convention is very much underfunded and that our willingness to address this situation is a reflection on our level of maturity and professionalism as country Parties.

The Group of 77 and China are very much disheartened at the outcome of the negotiations on programme and budget. We agreed, reluctantly, to accept the 'package deal', which was actually presented as a 'take-it-or-leave-it' proposal. It is our understanding that the implications of adopting the core budget for the 2006-2007 biennium will be felt most immediately in staff cuts to the tune of 14 posts, out of a small secretariat of roughly 60. It is clear that the implementation of the Convention and the efficiency of the Secretariat will be affected. Accordingly, we do not expect that any country Party will express surprise at a less-than-efficient secretariat, or at the firing of any of their nationals, or at an increase in land degradation across the globe.

The Group of 77 and China were, however, pleased to have been part of the decision to move to Euro budgeting in the following biennium, which it is hoped will benefit the Secretariat - or what is left of it - and, of course, some European and Group of 77 countries.

We have, in this COP, year after year, spoken of the logic of utilising this Convention to alleviate poverty and achieve

the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets relating to hunger and poverty. We have spoken of the global scourge of desertification and of its inextricable link to climate change and bio-diversity. We reiterate all these positions here and now.

Mr. President,

Throughout these negotiations, we have been struck by the enthusiasm of many delegations to put forward a position of 'non-negotiation'. Perhaps there will come a time again in our history when decisions like these will take into account the lives of people instead of figures. In the meantime, however, it is expected that we will have to accept the idea that non-negotiable positions can, and will increasingly be, adopted by more countries in more multilateral negotiations.

Mr. President,

Many years ago, a particular well-developed country decided to encourage mass immigration to man its burgeoning industry, as it faced a labour shortage: a logical idea. For several years, immigrants from a smaller developing country came in droves to work in this developed country. One aspect of this policy was that women with young children were not allowed to take these children with them. So they were left behind, often in the care of relatives or even distant friends.

Some thirty years later, this same developed country found itself plagued by a violent crime problem, with immigrants engaging in gangland-style activities. Interestingly enough, two other developed countries also began experiencing the same problems. In all three cases, many of these gangster-immigrants were from the same country, in fact the same developing country which supplied labour for the mass immigration drive mentioned earlier.

As it turns out, the emergence of a 'gang culture' in this developing country was linked to the boys who were left behind by their emigrant parents. At the same time, their female counterparts contributed to the emergence of a cyclical problem of teenage pregnancy.

I tell this story to illustrate how easily a small, seemingly logical policy decision in one part of the globe can turn into a serious disaster in another part. In other words, what goes around, comes around.

On a final and positive note, the member States of the G77 and China again express their appreciation to the Government and people of Kenya and the United Nations Office at Nairobi for hosting this seventh session of the COP. We hope that next time we meet, it will be in an atmosphere of greater professionalism and genuine commitment to the implementation of this Convention.

I thank you, Mr. President.