



STATEMENT BY MR. ANAND SHARMA, MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, AT THE THIRD-SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF MINISTERS FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE GROUP OF 77 ON SEPTEMBER 26, 2008

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate and thank Antigua and Barbuda for its untiring effort in promoting the Group's interests at various UN fora this year. My greetings also extend to the Republic of Sudan on its election as the Chairman of the Group of 77 for the year 2009. We wish it all success in discharging this important role, and reiterate India's whole-hearted support.

I would also like to thank Cote d'Ivoire for its generosity and wonderful hospitality in hosting the Twelfth Inter-governmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries earlier this year.

Mr. Chairman,

The role of developing countries in the world has undergone much change since the founding of this Group. Sustained poverty eradication efforts have borne fruit in many countries, though significant challenges remain. Intra-South trade and investment flows have re-invigorated South-South cooperation. Our economies are now playing a key role in backstopping global economic growth. Yet, the shared concerns that brought us together continue to be relevant even today, particularly the challenges of poverty eradication and development.

The ongoing financial crises caused by developed country markets have also demolished the myth that the need for reform is limited to developing countries.

Unfortunately, the international economic and financial architecture, and its institutions, are not in line with the new global realities. This must change. A comprehensive review of the international economic and financial architecture, so as to ensure a greater voice and increased participation by developing countries in decision-making and norm setting processes, is urgently needed.

Mr. Chairman,

Our meeting is taking place at a crucial time. We are at the halfway stage to the MDG target date of 2015, and it appears that many parts of the world are not on track to achieve the MDGs. The global food and energy crises have exacerbated the problems, whose impact is particularly severe on the most vulnerable. The Monterrey Review Conference is to be held in end-November 2008, against the backdrop that commitments by developed countries continue to remain unfulfilled. Projections for global growth remain pessimistic.

The global partnership for development must be genuinely implemented. We have, on various occasions, highlighted the need for effective action by developed countries to reverse the declining trend in ODA, to promote investment and trade that is pro-development and facilitate transfer of and access to developing countries of advanced technologies on preferential and concessional terms. In this context, a fairer IPR regime is a must so that critical technologies, be it in public health or climate change, are treated as global public goods, and rewards for innovators are balanced with the common good of humankind.

The success of the Monterrey Review Conference should be judged against these benchmarks. The Development Cooperation Forum of the Economic and Social Council must also play a key role in overseeing the effective implementation of all facets of development cooperation, including the global partnership for development.

We are disappointed that we have had to take a pause in the WTO negotiations; on our part we remain engaged towards a successful conclusion that will have the development dimension at its core. The livelihood security of subsistence and marginal farmers in the developing world can hardly be compromised.

Mr. Chairman,

The need for unity and solidarity among developing countries remains crucial. It is a tribute to our collective efforts that we have been able to project our common interests with one voice, despite unsuccessful efforts to divide us on artificial lines. As the ongoing negotiations on climate change in the UNFCCC have demonstrated, even in areas where some of our members have somewhat varying concerns, the Group has been able to coalesce around common elements and ensure that the interests of developing countries are adequately protected and promoted. As these crucial negotiations progress, we must ensure that the cohesiveness of the Group is maintained, and the Group takes a unified approach, based on the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities", which recognizes the differences in the contribution of developed and developing countries to global environmental

problems as well as the differences in their respective financial and technical capabilities to tackle such problems.

Another notable success of our group has been the ability to project the needs and concerns of special groups amongst us - the Least Developed Countries, the Landlocked Developing Countries, the Small Island Developing States, the African countries and others who are vulnerable and need our support. In this regard, we reaffirm India's support to the High-Level meeting on Africa's development needs held earlier this week, and the Mid-term review of the Almaty Programme of Action, to be held next week.

Before concluding, Mr. Chairman, I would like to reiterate India's commitment to South-South cooperation and the role of the G-77. India is already active in sharing its developmental experiences with numerous partner countries, as also its expertise in certain areas of capacity building and technology. India will further expand and intensify such cooperation with our developing country partners in the years ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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