



STATEMENT BY MR, ARINDAM BAGCHI, COUNSELLOR, AT THE HANDOVER CEREMONY OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE GROUP OF 77 ON JANUARY 23, 2009

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to join others before me in felicitating your Excellency on your election as Chairman of the Group of 77 for 2009. We wish Sudan the very best for its tenure as Chair of our Group, a task that we are confident will be discharged efficiently.

I would also like to convey India's deep appreciation to Antigua and Barbuda for the leadership it provided to the Group during the past year. My felicitations go to Ambassador John Ashe and his team for their able and dedicated efforts in promoting the Group's interests at various UN fora during the past year. We are particularly satisfied that a Small Island Developing State has successfully led the G-77.

Indeed, the continuing success of our Group has been in its ability to project the needs and concerns of all its members, including the Least Developed Countries, the Landlocked Developing Countries, the Small Island Developing States, the African countries and others who are vulnerable and need our special support. This spirit of unity and solidarity among developing countries must be maintained and strengthened.

As has been noted by others, the year 2008 presented a set of complex and special challenges for developing countries. The ongoing financial crises, which was caused by developed country markets and whose end appears nowhere in sight, has made our development challenges even more acute. The financial crisis must not be an excuse for the developed countries to renege on the fulfilment of their commitments.

The crisis has also demolished the myth that the need for reform is limited to developing countries. Clearly, a global and comprehensive effort is required, both to address the short-term effects and the need for long term reform, with effective participation by developing countries. A global governance regime, that does not

reflect the realities of today and give adequate voice and participation to developing countries, cannot succeed.

The Monterrey Review Conference was yet another challenging event. It is a tribute to our collective efforts that despite the grave economic circumstances in which the meeting was held, we were able to protect our interests. We must ensure effective follow-up of its decisions.

The ongoing climate change negotiations in the UNFCCC demonstrate clearly that the support and willingness that we expect from the developed countries is lacking. The Group of 77 must continue to maintain its 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.

It is a matter of satisfaction that the South Fund was operationalised during 2008, as also the successful holding of the Twelfth Inter-governmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries in Cote d'Ivoire. South-South technical and economic cooperation is the bedrock of our solidarity. In this regard, I would like to reiterate India's readiness to further expand and intensify our South-South cooperation initiatives with our developing country partners.

The solidarity of Group was clearly demonstrated yet again during various negotiations in New York, including the strengthening of the Development Pillar, Human Resources management reforms, ICT reforms, Administration of Justice, Law of the Sea issues, etc. The approval by the GA of UN Secretary-General's proposals regarding the strengthening of the Development Pillar of the UN Secretariat is a welcome first step in addressing the critical gaps that exist between the organization's capacity to deliver on the development related mandates. We look forward to the continued solidarity of the Group in furthering issues of common interest.

Before concluding, permit me to reiterate our best wishes to Sudan in its efforts during 2009 to articulate the concerns of developing countries.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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