



Statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, by Mr. Sivu Maqungo, Minister-Counsellor of the South African Mission to the Informal Meeting of the Plenary with members of the High-Level Panel on United Nations System Wide Coherence

New York, 6 April 2006

Mr President
Prime Ministers
Members of the Panel

Your Excellencies, the Group of 77 and China would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Co-Chairs and members of the Secretary-General's Panel on United Nations system-wide coherence. We also thank the President of the General Assembly for organising this informal meeting for Member States to interact with the High-Level Panel.


The Group of 77 and China is in the process of developing a concept paper for presentation to the Panel in which the central and most important tenet will be that Member States have collectively agreed at the 2005 World Summit that development is a central goal in itself.

The Group of 77 and China believes that the primary work of the Panel should be driven by a vision of a stronger role for the United Nations on development issues, and by the need to fully implement all agreed commitments from all the major United Nations Summits and Conferences in the economic, social and related fields. The main objective of the Panel's work must be an exercise aimed at strengthening multilateralism and promoting the wide-ranging development cooperation in the United Nations. This should be achieved through an enhanced global partnership for development, thus providing more effective assistance to developing countries at the country level. This would enable developing countries to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and by so doing ensure that the vision contained in the UN Charter is actually translated into reality.

The Group of 77 and China emphasizes that the United Nations must be developed into the premier international organisation and system, addressing economic, social and environmental issues. This strengthened role should cover the normative, analytical, policy and operational aspects of development. The comparative advantage of multilateralism, with the United Nations at its apex, is its universality and legitimacy. Nothing should be done to undermine pluralism and diversity, embodied in the United Nations. The holistic approach of the Panel must therefore be aimed at strengthening the United Nations so that it can realise its full potential in promoting equality in the economic, social and environmental fields.

The interests and needs of developing countries must be the point of departure for the Panel's work. For the United Nations to be truly effective, greater policy space must be given to developing countries to enable national development strategies to be truly and comprehensively nationally owned. The United Nations work must be reformed at the normative and operational levels to be fully aligned and complementary to nationally owned development goals. The concept of coherence has to be considered in terms of the policy and institutional framework of the United Nations and should take into account the different approaches which currently exist in the pursuit of national development strategies.

Mr President,



From this perspective, the G77 and China wonders about the appropriateness of defining or confining the United Nations role to "niche issues" (such as disaster management, post-conflict reconstruction or the environment), while leaving issues such as development strategies, trade, finance and macro-economic policy to other international organizations. The United Nations system is developmentally holistic and provides a diversity of views and approaches that the Bretton Woods Institutions seriously lack.

One of the fundamental reforms required would be for the United Nations, which is the most representative global organization to work in a coherent manner together with the Bretton Woods Institutions that have a major role in the development of many countries. Key to this coherence is the active voice and effective participation by developing countries in the decision-making processes of the Bretton Woods Institutions, which is central to promoting the legitimacy, relevance and effectiveness of the international financial system and international financial institutions.

System-wide coherence has to be instituted both at the analytical and operational levels. A realistic goal would be to remove the most obvious inconsistencies. There are at least four areas of interaction that impinge on development, namely, ODA, trade, debt and investment. It would, in this context, be important to clearly outline practical ways of how oversight and system wide coordination of the Economic and Social Council could be enhanced.

It is especially important that the mandate of all organizations, programmes, funds, agencies and commissions that truly assist development be maintained and strengthened. We do not want to prejudge the outcome of the High level Panel, though we would like to stress that development should be the central criteria of the Panel's analysis and evaluation of the United Nations System.

Mr President,

As the work of the Panel continues, there is a need for Member States to be kept informed and consulted, in an open, inclusive and transparent manner, in all phases of the work of the Panel. We believe that there should be mechanisms established that allow for

ample opportunities at all stages of the Panel's work, for Member States to provide inputs to the Panel and also to be informed about the progress that is being made.

Given the enormity of the task, which includes examining and giving proposals on the United Nations systems, operations at national, regional and international levels, it may be ambitious to expect that a report by the Panel could be completed in a few months. As a result, it may be better to have a comprehensive report that does justice to the range and complexity of issues, than to have a rushed report.

The Group of 77 and China looks forward to further interactions and to supporting the Panel in their important task.

I thank you