

## **Statement of the Director General Mr. LI Yong during the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations of the Group of 77 on 23 June 2014**

Excellencies, Colleagues and Friends,

Let me begin by saying how pleased and honored I am to be here with you today at the formal launch of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the establishment of the Group of 77. Our celebration follows on from last week's Extraordinary Summit of G-77 Heads of States and Government, held in Bolivia.

You can proudly say that the Group of 77 represents the greatest coalition of humanity.

Excellencies, Colleagues and Friends,

Let me go back in history on this memorable day.

The establishment of the Group in June 1964 during UNCTAD 1 has been described by many as one of the significant political phenomena of the post- second World War era, when developing countries and emerging nations of the south found a common voice and gathered around a common platform, thus establishing the Group system as the most enduring instrument of multilateral international cooperation and negotiation.

In their first declaration in June 1964, the founding fathers of the Group stated that “the developing countries have a strong conviction that there is a vital need to maintain, and further strengthen, this unity in the years ahead”. That unity and solidarity has survived all those decades, despite facing challenges and changing political and economic circumstances. The Group has not just met those challenges, but used them as impulses for change, increasing its numbers in the process. Today it proudly counts 133 Members among its ranks Throughout it all, the Group has never lost sight of the its mission and vision to create a more equitable international economic world order for living well.

We should not forget that the biggest challenge of our time remains the global eradication of poverty and to ensure that this eradication is irreversible. We cannot achieve poverty eradication without sustained economic growth and without addressing the issue of how developing countries can restructure their economies. History has shown us that countries that have achieved sustained economic growth and job creation have done so through industrialization.

I am confident that together we can continue the drive to eradicate poverty with our focus on, amongst others, achieving youth employment by helping young people to acquire skills and create new businesses, gender equality and the empowerment of women, enhancing South-South and triangular cooperation, and building effective partnerships – with all development actors including, increasingly, the private sector.

I am grateful for the support the Group of 77 has provided to help UNIDO accelerate inclusive and sustainable industrial development and to push for the inclusion of industrialization as a Sustainable Development Goal.

Excellencies, Colleagues and Friends,

Once again, I offer my most sincere congratulations and wish you every success on this memorable occasion. I look forward to the cultural performances and the multicultural food festival prepared by the members of the Group of 77.

In closing, I wish to assure you of UNIDO's full commitment to facilitating the work of your Group by continuing to host the G-77 Chapter here in Vienna, which was established in UNIDO in May 1998.

I thank you very much for your kind attention.