

**Speech by Hon. Rajesh A. Bhagwan  
Minister of Environment and National Development Unit,  
Republic Of Mauritius**

at

**The Special Ministerial Meeting of the  
Group of 77 and China to Comemorate the  
40 th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Group of 77**

Mr. Chairman,

It is indeed an honour and privilege to be participating in this Special meeting under your chairmanship. I congratulate you and your country, Qatar, for coordinating so effectively the Group of 77 since you took over chairmanship.

It is also my pleasure to be in São Paulo where the Government of Brasil has spared no effort to make our stay enjoyable and to provide all the necessary facilities to ensure that our meetings are held under the best of circumstances. I thank the government and the people of Brazil.

Mr. Chairman,

Much has been said about the achievements of G 77. What we retain from the testimonies is that in spite of the skeptics, the G77 has stood the test of time and is a force to reckon with in our pursuit of sustainable development. It is no secret that the G77 membership is quite heterogeneous. There are countries with various degrees of economic growth, and priorities differ from country to country. This heterogeneity is

further exacerbated by the effects of globalisation. However, the unity we projected in our diversity has made the strength of G77. This unity needs to be further consolidated and this session, commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of G77 provides ample opportunity to reflect on the best way forward in this direction.

During 40 years the G77 has played a key role and made critical contributions in advancing the global agenda for peace, development and for progress in the economic, social and environmental spheres. G77 should be able to continue to play this role and be more assertive in its approach in the international arena. We have numerous challenges ahead of us, the more important ones being; decreasing ODA, volatility of private capital flows, extraordinarily high level of external debts in many developing countries, market access, poverty, HIV/AIDS, and marginalisation of the more vulnerable developing countries like the small island developing states.

We definitely need the assistance and comprehension of the international community to address these issues effectively in true partnership, and if we are to achieve the MDG's and other internationally agreed development goals. As we sit here together on the eve of UNCTAD 11, we cannot help reaffirming the linkage between trade and development and the need to have a multilateral trading system which is truly open, equitable, transparent and which takes into consideration the basic interest of developing countries. When we signed the Uruguay Round Agreements, we agreed to allow for the optimal use of the world's resources in accordance with the objectives of sustainable development, in a manner consistent with our respective needs and concerns at different levels of our

economic development. Solidarity demands that we undertake collective efforts to help each other achieve sustainable development in a fair and equitable manner. For , if we allow the process of liberalisation to go on in an inexorable manner, it will transpose the cruel law of the jungle to humanity. The more competitive countries will prosper while vulnerable countries will increasingly face deprivation. The global trading system cannot allow for such a state of affairs. In this context we fully support the trade related sections of the Declaration we have adopted yesterday.

Mr. Chairman,

Much has been said about South South cooperation, and my delegation believes that the scope for such cooperation is real and needs to be enhanced. Effective cooperation can be realised through regional and sub regional initiatives like, for example, COMESA and SADC in Eastern and Southern Africa. Bilateral cooperation mechanisms like joint commissions between countries of the South could also help in the development of capacity, transfer of technology and in furtherance of trade.

We support the strengthening of the South Centre as a think tank for countries of the South. However, we should also make use of and support other organisations including some international NGO's like the Third World Network which can be important think tanks and provide informed advice on scientific and policy matters during our negotiations with partners of the North, as well as providing guidance in the implementation of the resulting agreements.

What we also require, Mr. Chairman, is a proper monitoring mechanism within the G77 system. It would be quite disappointing if we spent so much energy in pooling together our efforts to negotiate effectively multilateral agreements, which at the end of the day were not to be fully implemented. G77 should, therefore, work towards the development of a mechanism whereby it can follow up and monitor implementation of international agreements. The development of such a mechanism could be seriously considered in the context of the forthcoming South Summit in 2005, where it could be set up formally.

Mr. Chairman,

As country chairman of the Alliance of Small Island Developing States ( AOSIS ), I wish to place on record my sincere thanks to all members of G77 for their full support in the process leading to the International Meeting on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing states to be held in Mauritius in January 2005. My sincere thanks also for the trust put in Mauritius by allowing our Permanent Representative in New York, as Chairman of AOSIS to be the spokesperson of G77 during the negotiations of the SIDS Strategy Document which is to be one of the outcomes of the Mauritius meeting.

I take this opportunity to invite you all to Mauritius for this International Meeting, in order to provide your continued support to SIDS and thus demonstrate the strong <sup>solidarity</sup> unity that binds G77 members.

Thank you.