

DRAFT STATEMENT (Third draft June 11 10am)

MR MANDISI MPAHLWA
MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
SOUTH AFRICA

STATEMENT TO THE G77 AND CHINA SPECIAL MINISTERIAL MEETING
SAO PAULO, BRAZIL
11 -12 JUNE, 2004

Mr Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

On behalf of the South African Government, I wish to express my thanks and appreciation to the State of Qatar, as Chair of the G-77 and China, for convening this Special Ministerial Meeting on this 40th anniversary of the Group of 77 and China.

Let me also thank the Government and the people of the Federative Republic of Brazil for their hospitality in hosting this Special Ministerial Meeting. My delegation and I are honoured to be a part of these celebrations.

Our deliberations here today, in celebrating and evaluating the achievements of the G77 and China over the past forty years, should focus not only on what we have achieved, but also on how we can be more effective in future. We are meeting here today at a crucial juncture, for the Group of 77 and China, for the future of UNCTAD and also for the future of the WTO and the Doha Development Agenda. Our efforts here are a critical part of the broader global efforts to tackle global poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The times we live in are difficult and the challenges we as developing countries are facing, are increasing in complexity. It is important that we celebrate our achievements and our solidarity, but it is also important that we make a

detailed and accurate assessment of the current global dynamics in order to improve our strategies to achieve our goals.

Convening as we do on the eve of UNCTAD XI, this is an opportunity for us to clarify and pursue the international debate on the need for the reform of the international trading system as an integral part of the international development agenda, and especially for improved access to global markets. Progress in the Doha Agenda has been slow. Recent signs of progress are encouraging, however, and South Africa remains committed to the realization of the original developmental ambition of Doha. This forum helps to keep that vision in focus, and highlights the need for us as countries of the South to work together for the achievement of our objectives.

Mr. Chairman, allow me to mention what for South Africa is a truly significant achievement of this Group. South Africa's historic transition to peace and democracy is without doubt a tribute to South-South solidarity and South-South co-operation. As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of this Group, I am mindful that South Africa owes a debt of gratitude to all the countries of the South. Without your steadfast support for our determination to overcome the system of apartheid, our victory could not have been assured.

Now, more than ever, South Africa affirms the urgent call to achieve full multilateral co-operation and the democratization of the international system, in order to achieve a new global economic environment in which developed and developing countries are bound by a spirit of true dignity and solidarity.

From the founding of the G-77 and China in 1964, the countries of the South worked together, in order to use their combined strength to negotiate a better deal for the developing countries in the Cold War context. Times were extremely difficult, especially for many African countries in the post-colonial era. Gradually, though, we have been working more closely together and our cohesion has grown. In 2000, when we as developing countries convened at Head of State or Government level for the first South

Summit in Havana, we translated our vision for the 21st century into the Havana plan of Action. Our vision remains true, only more urgent.

The realization of our common development lies in the promotion of solidarity and co-operation amongst developing nations. Ultimately, our future success hinges on the adoption of new strategies for South-South co-operation. We therefore all look forward to productive outcomes from this Special Meeting that will see the development and implementation of future action plans that will effectively promote a more balanced world order.

The strengthening of South-South co-operation is an integral component of the vision that we have for a new world order. On the continent of Africa, the leadership is firmly committed to the strengthening of partnerships, in order to take primary responsibility for our own future. The leadership of Africa has understood the need for an institutional framework that could tackle the new challenges facing the continent in the context of a globalised world where Africa had found itself increasingly marginalised.

Mr. Chairman, South Africa regards the enhancement of meaningful relationships and partnerships, especially South-South, as the cornerstone of our foreign policy. This is one reason why we Africans successfully transformed the former Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into the new African Union (AU). South Africa has played its role in setting up the AU and we were honoured to host the Summit at which the AU was launched and to serve as its first Chair. The AU embodies the vision of sustainable development on the continent of Africa.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is the socio-economic development programme of action that has formally been adopted by the AU to be the vehicle by which we intend to achieve this objective. NEPAD is a vision of a continent in which the attainment and maintenance of peace and security is a prerequisite for growth and sustainable development. NEPAD is first and foremost a partnership, a partnership within countries between government, business and civil society.

Mr. Chairman, the inequalities inherent in the global economic system have always hampered the development of the countries of the South. The ongoing enhancement of policy co-ordination amongst our countries is a critical component for our successful participation in decision-making processes that influence world economic affairs. Today, South Africa is endeavouring to contribute in a systematic way to enhance policy co-ordination and South-South Co-operation, in order to win the war against poverty and promote development. A key aspect of this is to strengthen and deepen democratic governance at a global level.

Mr Chairman, South-South Co-operation is not intended to be a substitute for North-South Co-operation. We value our ties with the developed countries, but we recognise that to fully realise our objectives, we must diversify our relationships and achieve a much greater balance in our overall economic engagement. We salute the many efforts being made in the South to strengthen and deepen our co-operation and the building of powerful negotiating alliances to achieve our goals.

Here at UNCTAD XI, we need to ensure that UNCTAD is strengthened, so that it is better positioned to assist the developing countries to cope with the challenges of globalisation, and with the issues of global trade in particular. UNCTAD has done well, considering the very limited resources at its disposal. It needs to expand its activities, however, in order to help us understand the complexities of the global economic system in all its facets, and to ensure that it is able to offer all the help needed by developing countries, whether in terms of training or capacity-building, or in terms of providing a specialised forum where we can map out our trade strategies together.

We go back from Sao Paulo and UNCTAD XI to the very delicately-poised WTO negotiations, which are so crucial for the future economic growth and development of the world economy, and the developing world. In Cancun, we demonstrated that the countries of the South are more united than ever. We refused to allow any attempt to reduce the ambition of the Doha Development Agenda, and thereby postpone again the

need to make fundamental adjustments in the protectionist agricultural sector of the North. Fundamental reform and adjustment in these economies is essential to unlock the development potential of many developing countries. The promises made in Doha to ensure that this round is a genuine development round that will address the existing inequities in the multilateral trading system must be adhered to.

We the countries of the South have come a long way since 1964. We still have a long way to go, but we are now more determined than ever to succeed in our collective objectives. We are the Group of 77 and China. Standing together, we are heard. More than ever, we owe it to future generations to work tirelessly to find new and creative ways to work together in mobilising the resources that exist in the world for the elimination of poverty. To that end, this Special Ministerial Meeting contributes to a raising of the level of awareness that promotes deliberate and active policy co-ordination and programmes to enhance South-South Co-operation. South Africa will continue to be a responsible and committed partner in our common journey to promote and enhance human development in all its dimensions.

For South Africa, the Group of 77 and China remains a critical vehicle for realising our objective of building and strengthening global economic governance and development. We salute the achievements of the G-77 and China over the last forty years. May we continue to consolidate the gains and strive to achieve our noble objectives.

Thank you for your attention.