



INDIA
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STATEMENT
BY
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MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS
AND
HEAD OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION

AT THE
MEETING OF THE HEADS OF STATE AND
GOVERNMENT OF THE GROUP OF 77
SECOND SOUTH SUMMIT AT DOHA, QATAR

(15-16 JUNE 2005)

Mr. Chairman, Your Majesties, Your Highnesses, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Heads of Delegation and Delegates,

At the outset, Mr. Chairman, allow me to thank you for this opportunity and to express my appreciation for your stewardship of this Summit.

On behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, it is my privilege to thank His Highness the Emir of Qatar and his government for their generous hospitality and excellent organization in hosting the Second South Summit in Doha. For me personally, it is a special honour to be asked by my Prime Minister to head the Indian delegation for this important gathering in the State of Qatar, with which I have been fortunate to be associated in many capacities. I also commend Qatar on its noble initiative to establish the South Fund on Development and Human Circumstances. India is happy to lend its support by pledging a contribution of US Dollar two million to the Fund, for development projects by India in the countries of the South.

Mr. Chairman,

In the context of the forthcoming high-level event in New York, this Summit gives us the opportunity to restore development as the centre-piece of the global agenda, with primacy of the UN. Our deliberations have underscored the need for the development agenda to be inclusive, going beyond the Millennium Development Goals and the Monterrey Consensus. I would particularly emphasise the need to implement the outcomes of the Brussels Programme of Action, the Almaty Plan and the Mauritius Strategy. As regards SIDS, India, which itself has more than a thousand islands, has constantly exchanged her experiences in meeting their special challenges through capacity building, training and knowledge-sharing. We are to organize a workshop on key vulnerabilities of SIDS in New Delhi very shortly.

Mr. Chairman,

As I stand here, I recall India's first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, whose vision and leadership were key to the birth of Afro-Asian cooperation through Bandung and solidarity of the developing world through the Non-Aligned Movement. It is not a coincidence, Mr. Chairman, that our present Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh was the Member Secretary of the South-South Commission which was headed by H.E. Dr. Julius Nyerere. From its first Prime Minister to the present one, from its birth as an independent nation to its confident strides on the international stage, in development and in difficulties, India has remained steadfast in its commitment and efforts to advance the collective cause of the South.

Mr. Chairman,

India's economic reforms, begun during Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's Prime Ministership in the 1980s and given a fillip by Dr. Manmohan Singh when he was Finance Minister in the early 1990s, have resulted in India's enhanced trade and economic cooperation with other countries of the South. Today, around 35% of India's foreign trade is with developing countries; and this does not include hydrocarbons. India imported last year about USD 20 billion worth of petroleum – all of it from the South, and exported USD 5 billion of processed petroleum products also to developing countries. This beneficial

interrelationship is bound to become stronger with India's consistent and high economic growth rate expected to continue in the foreseeable future. Most of India's largest joint ventures abroad are with developing countries - in fact, with our hosts in Qatar, in neighbouring Oman, in Sudan and in Viet Nam, to name a few.

Mr. Chairman,

We place great store on our special initiatives for developing countries, including the developing countries of Africa, and have been sharing our experience in information technology, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, medical sciences, renewable and non-conventional energy and remote sensing, among others. We are especially happy to put together a connectivity mission for hospitals and educational institutions in 53 African countries using fibre optic and a dedicated satellite. India's TEAM-9 initiative with our friends in West Africa, assistance to NEPAD, the Trilateral Commission of India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA), as well as the Trust Fund within the UNDP for poverty alleviation are other examples of the fact that South-South cooperation is not a mere phrase for my country, but a way of life, a philosophy for growth and development - together.

We the developing countries have a common fight against poverty and disease. As part of our contribution, India is considering earmarking USD 1.5 billion for lines of credit to be used to help Africa fight the battle against HIV/AIDS and other pandemics. We hope to encourage our pharmaceutical companies to establish production facilities in Africa to cater to the increasing requirement for affordable medicines, especially for anti-retro viral drugs.

In our partnership with other developing countries, we have paid special attention to capacity building. As early as 1964, India established the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation [ITEC] programme which has provided over US \$2.5 billion worth of technical assistance to other developing countries. More than 5000 representatives of developing countries are annually provided training in over 250 institutions under different scholarship programmes.

Mr. Chairman,

The recent natural disasters caused by the Tsunami and Hurricane Ivan have brought home to all the need for international cooperation at such times. In the spirit of South-South cooperation, India helped formed a continuous bridge of search and rescue, medical supplies and mobile hospitals, relief and rehabilitation assistance to affected countries despite huge loss of life and economic devastation faced by us.

Mr. Chairman,

India has written off the debts of all the highly indebted poor countries and is happy to note that the G-8 has now also accepted the same approach. This, we feel, is of critical importance for the economic stability and prospects of the highly indebted and the least developed among us. Debt repayments and worsening terms of trade can neutralize all efficiency gains from good governance and sound macro-economic management, and reduce resources available for education and public health. That is why it is so important that debt write-offs have to be accompanied by better terms of trade, greater access to markets and investment inflows. The same logic governs the need to ensure meeting

0.7% ODA target and supplementing this with innovative financial flows.

Standing here, I recall that it is the same venue where just a few years back we had successfully defended the interests of the developing countries at the Doha Ministerial Meeting of the WTO. The solidarity of the South is essential for making the WTO Doha Round development oriented in reality and not just in rhetoric for truly safeguarding the special and differential treatment and flexibilities of developing countries. Hence, also the importance of using all the possibilities in TRIPS to fashion patent laws that ensure continuing low prices of essential drugs. Moreover, we need to step up the volume of intra-South bilateral and regional trade, investment and technology transfer. Mutually beneficial trade preferences among developing countries can promote economic growth and development. Therefore, the third round of the Global System of Trade Preferences among developing countries holds significant promise.

As in the case of international trade, financial and monetary organizations, so also in the currently strongest body of the United Nations, it is only the permanent membership of developing countries as a group in solidarity, which can contribute effectively to realizing the political and economic agenda of the developing world. This would increase policy space and participation for all and the change in the correlation of forces would strengthen the General Assembly and ECOSOC. Such a change can help in reestablishing the pivotal role of the United Nations, where the UN sets the agenda and the Bretton Woods and other institutions follow. Such permanent membership of developing countries would ensure optimal reform: that human rights are not politically misused; that laws are not made against interests of developing countries; that responsibility to protect is not used for interfering.

Mr. Chairman,

We take this opportunity to re-dedicate ourselves, in the spirit of South-South solidarity, to further enhance our cooperation with our partners in developing countries. I am reminded of the words of Pandit Nehru, "We ...need to launch a decisive assault against poverty.....We, again, need to stand side by side to fight diseases that continue to afflict our people. We today, at more than any other time, need to stand together..."

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.