



REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

STATEMENT BY

HIS EXCELLENCY MR. FESTUS G. MOGAE
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

AT THE

SECOND SOUTH SUMMIT OF
THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA

Doha, Qatar

15 June 2005

Your Majesties

Your Royal Highness, the Emir of the State of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani and Host of the Second South Summit

Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, The Right Honourable Percival J. Patterson, Prime Minister of Jamaica

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government

Excellencies, Foreign Ministers

Distinguished Delegates

1. Let me begin by expressing my gratitude and that of my delegation to the Government and people of Qatar for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to us since our arrival.
2. The City of Doha has become a symbol of our hopes and aspirations for a fairer and equitable international trading system. It was here that Qatar hosted the Second Ministerial Conference in 2001 which launched the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations. It was out of that meeting that the Doha Development Agenda was conceived. It is befitting that we are meeting here today to rekindle the spirit of South-South co-operation.
3. I also wish to congratulate you, Right Honourable Patterson, on your assumption of the Chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China. I assure you of my support throughout your tenure of office. We welcome your able leadership. We are fully aware of your deep knowledge of, commitment to, and brilliant eloquence in articulating issues of interest to the South.
4. Mr. Chairman, we are meeting here not as a club of the poor but an integral part of humanity that is concerned about the urgent need to construct a more just and equitable world order. We are here not to glorify poverty and under-development, but to collectively reflect on how we can strengthen one another in tackling our challenges.

5. We have come to Doha not to condemn the highly industrialized countries but to seek realistic and practical solutions to the challenges of our common future. We seek constructive engagement and partnership with the North. We need them and they need us.

6. When we met in Havana in 2000 at that maiden South Summit of the Group of 77 and China, we agreed on a concrete plan, the Havana Programme of Action as a tangible strategy for strengthening South-South Co-operation. The Havana Programme of Action recognizes the potential benefits of co-operation among developing countries. South-South co-operation remains a potent tool for the advancement of our interests.

7. In the face of mounting global challenges such as unfair trade practices, hunger, poverty, HIV/AIDS, conflicts and terrorism, South-South co-operation reinforces the spirit of self reliance, interdependence and solidarity among developing countries. It has proved to be a reliable vehicle for pooling together and sharing best practices on development experiences in a variety of fields such as scientific research, ICT, human resource development, education and training as well as university and college exchanges.

8. Five years after Havana, it is only proper that we pause and reflect on progress regarding the implementation of our agreed commitments. We must individually and collectively ask ourselves as to what steps we have to take to further enhance South-South co-operation. I am convinced that our common endeavors must be geared towards addressing South-South inequities in the areas of trade, investment and science and technology.

9. We must begin by arresting emerging trade inequities in the South if we are to have the moral authority to demand the speedy removal of trade imbalances with the industrialized countries.

Recent studies have shown that whilst it is urgent and indeed desirable to bring about a more just global trading system, we should not ignore the benefits that can be derived from dismantling trade barriers between developing countries. While we must continue to demand open access to the developed country markets as a right, countries of the South must also fully explore or utilize the potential for south-south trade.

10. In doing so the countries of the south must never fail to recognize that we are at different stages of development. The advent of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) regime is already eroding the benefits that some of our countries have for many years enjoyed under a variety of preferential dispensations with the industrialized countries.

11. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Secretariat (UNCTAD) has reported that two thirds of South-South trade took place in Asia, mainly driven by East Asia. Africa for many years has had the lowest share of global trade. This challenges us to work harder in promoting export oriented growth and in attracting investment. It is imperative that these trade and investment imbalances be addressed if the new geography of international trade is to have any real meaning to all of us.

12. There is need for more investment by the South in Africa to enable this region not only to import from the rest of the world for consumption, but also to develop a solid industrial base, and to be able to export to other markets as well.

13. This is possible and achievable. In Botswana we already have concrete and effective co-operation in many fields with a number of countries of the South such as the People's Republic of China, India, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Singapore and Malaysia.

14. In the fight against HIV/AIDS, we in Botswana are deeply appreciative of the commendable support and solidarity extended to us by the Republic of Cuba. President Fidel Castro Ruz has assigned a contingent of health workers of various professional qualifications to buttress our frontline in the war against this dreadful epidemic. And they are doing a marvelous job!

15. Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, in saying that we are at different levels of development is not to negate the need to work towards closer south-south cooperation in international trade negotiations. There can be no doubt that as developing countries there is more that binds us than that which divides us.

16. In this respect, it remains important that in taking our respective national interests into account in multilateral trade negotiations, we should, as much as possible, where appropriate, seek common ground so as to fully utilize our numerical strength and political weight to advance our cause. At Cancun, Mexico in 2003 we stood together and clearly demonstrated our solidarity and the strength we can muster to protect our common interests.

17. Mr. Chairman, education, science and technology remain critical to the advancement of any development agenda. Our ongoing efforts to strengthen south-south co-operation in this area are commendable. It is important that we continue to increase investment in ICT and promote sharing of ICT knowledge and infrastructure among developing countries.

18. We are pleased that some countries of the South and in particular the Asian countries are increasingly closing the digital divide. Asian countries have made significant advancement in the area of science and technology.

19. This is a welcome development which gives both hope and inspiration to African countries. According to the World Bank Millennium Project, Africa has only 18 scientists and engineers per million population compared with 69 in south Asia, 76 in Middle East, 273 in Latin America, and 903 in East Asia.

20. Bridging the digital divide is therefore as much a challenge within the South as it is in north-south relations. It is our hope that we can count on the support and co-operation of our friends in the South. We look forward to the World Summit on the Information Society to be held in Tunis from 16-18 November 2005 to provide further impetus to our efforts in this area.

21. Your Majesties, Your Royal Highnesses, Excellencies Heads of State and Government, we are meeting today against a backdrop of significant global developments that fully justify and challenge the relevance of south-south cooperation as a tool for advancing the interests of developing countries. During the past ten years, we have been grappling with the question of how to reform the United Nations to make it more relevant and responsive to current global challenges. When the organization was formed in 1945 it had only 51 Members. Today, the membership has not only increased to 191, but also the challenges the United Nations face have dramatically changed both in scope and complexity, demanding a more representative and reinvigorated world body.

22. Poverty, hunger, disease, environmental degradation, terrorism, violence and conflict are part of a litany of problems that beset our world. We must therefore consistently and constantly remind each other that no single state can face these challenges alone. For small States such as Botswana, we are convinced that our interest can be enhanced in an atmosphere of multilateral co-operation and tolerance within the framework of a more inclusive, representative and responsive United Nations.

23. In this respect, we strongly believe that the imperatives for reform are more pressing than ever before. This is why Botswana fully subscribes to the African position and supports the reform efforts by the United Nations Secretary General.

24. As a Group of 132 countries we acknowledge that we have both the numerical strength and moral authority but effective political power rests with a small number of countries. The world needs to be persistently reminded that democracy is not only desirable at the national. International institutions and organizations should also be more democratic and representative of the will of their members. In other words there can be no logical justification for democracy at the national level and dictatorship at the international level.

25. We look forward to the completion of the Doha Round of trade negotiations preferably not later than 2006. However, we should not lose sight of the development dimension of trade during this Round. It took the Uruguay Round about seven years, and throughout that period it did not focus on the development dimension of trade relations. It is in our interest to ensure that the Doha Round should be a genuine development Round. We thus remain hopeful that the WTO Ministerial Meeting to be held in Hong Kong in December 2005 will reach consensus on this fundamental issue of interest to the developing countries.

26. Mr. Chairman, let me conclude by reaffirming our abiding faith in South-South co-operation. We are here because we are convinced that South-South Co-operation is committed to fostering the spirit of self-reliance, interdependence and mutual solidarity. At the recent Africa/Asia Summit, I stated that Africa is determined to provide requisite leadership to her own development agenda.

Today, I reiterate that fact. Through the African Union and its New Partnership for Africa's Development, we have decided to take responsibility for our destiny and to co-operate with the rest of the international community in transforming the political, economic and industrial landscape of the continent. It is important that during this time of renewal, we call for the consistent and assured support of all.

27. In exploring ways of strengthening South-south co-operation, it is important that we be pragmatic and measured by including in our Plan of Action programmes that fall within the realm of our control. We must adopt Plans that we can implement without recourse to external assistance. In this regard, we should try by all means to avoid creating more institutions that will add strain to our already limited resources.

28. Lastly, let us hope that industrialized countries will seriously consider the outcome of this Summit because it is in the common interest of humanity. It would be most unfortunate if our call for partnership, co-operation and mutual support would fall on deaf ears or simply dismissed by cynics as the exhortations of the South doing what they do best – talking. Let the world unite for peace and in the language of the Charter of the United Nations by “promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.”

29. I thank you for your attention.