



VIENNA CHAPTER

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR. DUMISANI KUMALO,
AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SOUTH AFRICA TO
THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE
OPENING CEREMONY OF THE FORTIETH MEETING OF THE
CHAIRMEN/COORDINATORS OF THE GROUP OF 77 CHAPTERS: VIENNA,
8-9 JUNE 2006

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of 77, it is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to this Fortieth meeting of the Chairmen/Coordinators of the Chapters of the Group of 77. For the first time we hold this chapter's meeting at UNIDO Headquarters. I would like to take this occasion to express my appreciation to the Chairmen/Coordinators for their positive response to attend this meeting.

I wish to record my gratitude to the Chairman of the Vienna Chapter, Ambassador Horacio Bazoberry, Permanent Representative of Bolivia to the International Organizations in Vienna, to Dr. Kandeh Yumkella, Director-General of UNIDO and Mr. Antonio Costa, Director-General of UNOV for the excellent arrangements made in hosting this chapters' meeting. I would like also to seize this opportunity to express my appreciation to Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of IAEA. My appreciation also goes to the Representatives of OPEC Fund, as well as to other Heads of Organizations based in Vienna for their support and attendance.

This 40th meeting of the Chapters of the Group of 77 is taking place at a critical time for developing countries particularly as it falls immediately after the important action on the UN reform that took place last month in the United Nations General Assembly. This is a new opportunity for the Group of 77 to reaffirm its cohesion and unity in the challenging international environment and to position itself as one of the principal actors in the difficult multilateral stage. The prospects of achieving the objectives of the Group are closely related to our capacity to maintain and improve coordination of the activities that we undertake in the different centers of the United Nations system.

Let me reiterate once again that the Group of 77 and China attaches high priority to the reform of the United Nations with the objective to strengthen the Organization so that it can efficiently respond to the current and future challenges affecting the international community, in particular those concerns and interests of developing countries, which constitute the vast majority of its membership.

As stressed on many occasions, we support a meaningful reform that is reflective of the views of the collective membership. We want to strengthen the Organization and

ensure that it is able to effectively and efficiently implement all the mandates that we have bestowed upon it. A stronger United Nations that responds more effectively to our collective needs is in our common interest.

In the recent held Special Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77 and China in Putrajaya, Malaysia, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs reaffirmed the Group's determination to further strengthen the role, the capacity effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations in the field of development, with the objective to improve its performance, in order to realize the full potential of the organization, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and to respond more effectively to the needs of Member States and in particular to the new global challenges facing the United Nations in the twenty-first century.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a response to global challenges, South-South Cooperation has expanded and created a stronger voice for the countries of the South on the international arena. It has become an integral part of the mutual relations between the developing countries and an important means of promoting the exchange of ideas, experience, knowledge, technical advances, skills and expertise across a broad range of sectors. There is a greater commitment from developing countries to support developments efforts in order to reach a new level of economic independence.

Today the level of awareness concerning the potential of South-South Cooperation at both the government and the international community level is very significant. South-South cooperation has grown in importance for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged countries, especially in Africa. Despite this important evolution, much more can be achieved especially through triangular cooperation. There is a need to further strengthening South-South Cooperation including through enhancing the capacities of the institutions and mechanisms that promote such cooperation.

I wish to welcome the initiative by UNIDO and the Vienna Chapter in organizing a panel discussion to address trade capacity-building and energy for development. Trade capacity or the ability for a country to penetrate the international market through goods and services is the goal pursued by all developing countries. In the context of trade agreement South-South cooperation could enhance efficiency, decrease competition among developing countries, and enable economies of scale to attract foreign direct investment and consolidate infrastructures. Today there is a need to focus on south-south technical assistance, market access, transportation and communications.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the support that OPEC Fund has provided over the years for developing countries. Let me reiterate once again our desire to see the OPEC Fund support on a regular basis our efforts to strengthen our institutional and substantive capacity within the context of the Group of 77 research program and to co-finance south-south projects within the framework of the Perez Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF). We believe that the time has come for the establishment of a strategic partnership between OPEC Fund and the Group of 77. In

my capacity as Chairman of the Group of 77, I look forward to discuss with OPEC Fund the operationalization of such strategic partnership.

In conclusion, let me emphasize the need to continue strengthening the unity and solidarity among the countries of the South, as an indispensable element in the defense of our right to development and for the creation of a more just and equitable international order and for preserving and nurturing the policy space necessary for developing countries to pursue their development objectives.

I would like also to stress the significance of coordination and harmony in our work. It is important that we build together solidarity and common perception of the issues that we are facing together as we struggle in each of our chapters for the cause of development. I would like you to maximize this opportunity to bring forth all your concerns so that together we could discuss them in a single voice that represents all the chapters of the Group of 77 as one entity.

Thank you.