

**G-77 Handover Ceremony**  
**STATEMENT delivered by H.E. Maria Cleofe R. Natividad**  
**Ambassador/Permanent Representative**  
**Incoming Chair of the Group of 77 and China (July-December 2020)**

Excellencies,  
Colleagues,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Good morning.

1. Let me first thank Ambassador Omar Amer Youssef for gathering us today for the handover of the G-77 Chairmanship of the Vienna Chapter. I am honored by the presence of the heads of the multilateral bodies here in Vienna:
  - Her Excellency Ghada Fathi Waly, Director General of the UN Office in Vienna and Executive Director of the UNODC – I wish to warmly welcome you, Madam Director General, to Vienna, and convey to you our full support and cooperation as you take on your new duties. Your appointment is an inspiration to all of us, as it is a concrete manifestation that we are moving forward in our gender balance agenda.
  - His Excellency Li Yong, Director General of UNIDO - We reaffirm the strong partnership between the Group and UNIDO towards inclusive, sustainable, and future-oriented industrial development, which you have relentlessly pursued;
  - His Excellency Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the IAEA – I reiterate my warm congratulations on your appointment, especially as you come from our ranks – a fellow Ambassador from G77. I look forward to working with you in the months and years to come, as we have done so well in the past; and
  - His Excellency Dr. Lassina Zerbo, Executive Secretary of the CTBTO – We value your work towards the entry into force of the CTBT, as well as your efforts to promote science diplomacy and capacity-building;
2. The gathering of this powerhouse representation speaks volumes of the undiminished role of the Group of 77 and China in Vienna. This likewise conveys a continued vote of confidence for the excellent stewardship of the Group by Ambassador Youssef for the past year. I am therefore very pleased to join Excellencies and colleagues in congratulating and thanking Ambassador Youssef for his critical role in sustaining and promoting the Group's interests in Vienna.
3. In 2019, we all took part in the deliberations of difficult topics and issues across all these multilateral institutions. Ambassador Youssef skillfully employed his diplomatic prowess behind the scenes, and lent his solid voice to further promote the Group's interests in the many critical issues tackled and the milestone events held last year. To name a few: the High-Level Segment and the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs; the 8<sup>th</sup> Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption (*in Abu Dhabi last December 2019*); the 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNIDO General Conference (*held in November 2019 also in Abu Dhabi*); the beginning of the negotiations on the “Space 2030 Agenda;” strengthening

the future verification regime under the CTBT; negotiations on the IAEA's 2020-2021 budget biennium, and related topics such as targets for the Technical Cooperation Fund and the Due Account Mechanism.

4. Speaking of these brings me back to those weeks leading up to the IAEA General Conference last September 2019. As a Group, we built fond memories of our close collaboration during those times we hurdled every obstacle that came our way, in particular, our successful fight for the Group's resolutions, which embodied the issues closest to our hearts. Through our Group's joint efforts, we managed to pass all 12 IAEA resolutions in an unprecedented record time in the Committee of the Whole's history. As Chair of last year's Committee of the Whole, I reached out to you, Ambassador Youssef, several times and sought your valued advice on how to deal with the most contentious issues – and I thank you again for your kind support and friendship, including in the resolution of this year's G-77 Chairmanship. Not only did Ambassador Youssef serve as a unifying figure of the Group, he also made important, concrete contributions to our shared success.
5. Needless to say, Ambassador Youssef set a high standard of leadership of the Group of 77 and China. He will be leaving big shoes to fill. It is therefore an honor for me to have the chance to follow in his big footsteps – *while wearing high heels*. As incoming Chair of G77 Vienna Chapter from July to December 2020, I commit my time and energy as I pledge to work doubly hard to achieve the common interests of the developing world, especially, national development, capacity building, geographic representation, and, *close to my heart*, gender equality.
6. I will endeavor that our development needs will continue to be at the forefront of our participation in the multilateral bodies in Vienna – albeit in ensuring adequate resources for appropriate programs, or full respect for our inalienable and sovereign rights.
7. As a woman, I will proudly take on the role of ensuring women's representation in the activities across all Vienna-based institutions. I shall support the careers of women scientists and researchers, to help realize the vision of U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres as stated in his message yesterday on the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.
8. Excellencies, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen: you can be assured of my unwavering commitment to build consensus and bridge differences in the pursuit of our shared development interests across all geographical groupings within the G77.
9. I will continue to abide by, and boldly pursue, the Philippines' time-honored and principled commitment to the G-77 development agenda. This shall be my compass.
10. At this juncture, please let me conclude by thanking again and congratulating Ambassador Youssef and his team, the Egyptian Permanent Mission, and the G-77 Secretariat for a job well done in the past year. Finally, I also express my sincere appreciation to your Excellencies and colleagues for the trust and confidence that you have bestowed upon me, and I look forward to working hand in hand with each and everyone. Thank you!