

**Remarks by Ambassador Aftab Ahmad Khokher on the Occasion of Pakistan's
Assumption of the Chair of the Vienna Chapter of the G77 and China (26
January 2023)**

Excellencies,

Dear Colleagues,

It is a great honour and privilege for me personally as well as for my delegation to be officially assuming the Chairmanship of the Group of 77.

At the outset, I would like to thank and appreciate the outgoing Chair, my dear friend Ambassador Azeddine Farhane, and his team for Morocco's excellent leadership of the Group during the last year.

I would also like to thank the Executive Heads of the Vienna-based organizations for their presence with us today which signals their strong support to the Group and its objectives.

Pakistan has an abiding commitment to the G77 and the values, ideals and principles it espouses. This commitment is reflected in Pakistan's chairmanship of the Group in New York in 2022 where we worked diligently to advance the common political and economic interests of developing countries. With your support, we intend to continue that admirable work here in Vienna while being guided by the same devotion and commitment.

We are conscious of the immense responsibility we are assuming in taking up the G77 Chair in Vienna at a time when the international community, in particular the developing countries, are facing multiple and multidimensional challenges. The ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic cast a long shadow and decades' worth of developmental goals stand eroded. Climate change and extreme weather events are wreaking havoc across the globe. Despite having a negligible carbon footprint, it is the developing countries which are paying the heaviest price. This was painfully brought home to us during the recent devastating floods in Pakistan. Conflicts which spur irregular migration and refugee crises continue to rage. Organized crime and the drug problem not only remain undefeated but metastasize on the back of modern technologies. Illicit financial flows continue to drain the meagre resources of developing countries and the return of proceeds of crime and stolen assets remains a distant dream. Food insecurity and disease plague vast swathes of the globe. Disrupted supply chains and rising energy prices continue to widen the rich poor gap even further. To compound all these challenges, the multilateralist system and institutions are themselves under a strain which inhibits their ability to facilitate the search for consensus-based solutions.

Our collective work in Vienna in close partnership with the Vienna-based organizations could not be more consequential and impactful in helping us grapple with these multiple, interrelated and evolving challenges.

The Vienna Chapter of the G-77 has always risen to the task of effectively defending and advancing the developing countries' shared interests in the different fora. We can achieve much more when we actively participate in the Group's work and when we are united and speak with one voice.

I would like to assure you that my team and I will make every effort to protect and promote the interests of the Group. Together, we will strive for more fairness in the international system by pushing for balanced, equitable and non-discriminatory policies and approaches. We will develop and project common positions on thematic issues handled at the Vienna-based organizations to ensure that their work responds more effectively to their priorities of developing countries. In doing so, we will be guided by the spirit of consensus; we will first aim to resolve, and if we cannot do that, avoid issues which could undermine the Group's solidarity. A sustained and constructive dialogue with our partners outside the Group will also be one of our priorities to preserve the multilateral architecture.

We are confident that you will extend us your wholehearted support in this task.

I would like to assure the executive heads of the Vienna-based organizations that they can count on the Group's support just as we count upon theirs in the pursuit of our common goals.

Before concluding, I would like to acknowledge and thank our colleagues who have volunteered to serve as the Coordinators of the Group's various Task Forces.

In the end, I would like to thank all of you once again for the trust you have reposed in Pakistan in taking up this responsibility. We look forward to an excellent and productive year for the Group ahead.

Thank you.