

Draft Speaking Notes for Ambassador Nosipho Mxakato-Diseko on the occasion of the G77 Anniversary Silver Jubilee of the G77 and China, held in Vienna, Austria and virtual platform on 31 May 2023

His Excellency Ambassador Aftab Ahmad Khokher, Permanent Representative of Pakistan and Chairperson of the G77 Vienna Chapter,

Your Excellencies, Permanent Representatives;

Heads of International Organisations;

Distinguished delegates and Dear Friends

It gives me great pleasure to participate in the 25th anniversary celebrations to mark the inauguration of the Office of the G77 in Vienna by the then United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) Director General Mr. Carlos Magariños on the 19th of May 1998.

South Africa as the Chairperson of the Group was honoured to represent the interests of the Group at this seminal moment of its history. With the support of my colleagues, the Permanent Representatives of the G77 Member States, United and bound together by a common sense of purpose, we felt it our duty to establish an Office that would both serve as a Focal Point and a base for the Group to effectively represent the interests of our people who constitute over 75% of the global population; and also to ensure continuity by creating a repository of information and institutional memory to support members of Group.

Let me use this opportunity to pay tribute to UNIDO for their courage, vision and foresight in supporting the G77 Office over the past 25 years. For my colleagues, Permanent Representatives in Vienna, it was a singular honour to welcome His Excellency Kofi Annan, the then Secretary-General of the United Nations and his staff during his visit to the Vienna G77 Chapter on 29 June 1998. We were proud of this historic moment that we knew would have long-term benefit and impact for the G77.

Through the support of UNIDO, we not only gained an office but benefitted from the support of their staff, Ms Anne-Marie Heuls, the G77 Coordinator, who was a shining star as she went above and beyond her duties to support the Group and to whom we must remain grateful. I commend Ms Crosby Plaza, the newly appointed Coordinator as well as all the staff in this important Office for their tireless efforts and service. I thank Gerd Muller, the UNIDO Director General and Member States for UNIDO's commitment to continue to support the G77 Office.

I would also like to pay tribute to the G77 Member States (Permanent Representatives and experts) that have given meaning and substance to the vision and mission of the G77 Office. Let us not forget that progress on the realisation of all the 17 indivisible and interdependent Sustainable Development Goals, agreed to by our Heads of State and Government in the ambitious United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) remains a central challenge for our people. According to credible data, many countries lost two

decades of progress on development as a result of the COVID19 pandemic, virtually sliding back to the period of the MDGs at the turn of the century. A United and Single-Minded G77 is therefore key in the recovery of progress and the attainment of the SDGs by 2030, which is in 6 and half years. I cannot overemphasise the importance of Unity and Single-mindedness for the group throughout the UN system to ensure that the hard-won gains we have achieved over the years are not undermined and eroded; and that we speak a common language on key areas such as Climate Change.

Chairperson, the current global landscape will no doubt increasingly test the resolve and resilience of the global multilateral architecture. Another key task for the group is to guard against the dilution of the fundamental tenets and principles of the international rule of law and the erosion of a fair, just, and equitable global system of governance. It is therefore critical that the unity of purpose and solidarity of the Group which have held it together over the years are jealously guarded in all the matters and fora. In the context of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), it was through the collective efforts of G-77 that headway was achieved in ensuring that any increase in the Regular Budget is matched by an increase in the Technical Cooperation Fund thus contributing to making the provision of resources for the Technical Cooperation Programme sufficient, assured and predictable.

Chairperson, in closing, let remind G77 Member States of our responsibility to remain engaged on global matters of economic development as well as peace and security. Our developed partners are astute in using multilateralism to further their narrow interests. It is therefore important for the G77 to be vigilant in protecting our gains and proactive in ensuring that multilateralism serves the interests of 75% of humanity which is in our countries. The Group must continue to prioritise dialogue with other regions and Groups to forge a better understanding about our long-held positions. I applaud efforts to keep our views available on every platform as we continue to build the future that we want. Let us continue to jealously guard against wedge drivers who thrive on a divided and weak G77 and united voice of the South. Our task going forward is to stay the course and look for more opportunities and ways to expand and cooperate with others who share our perspectives.

I thank you.