



REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR VALERIE RUGENE,

GROUP OF 77 & CHINA HANDOVER CEREMONY,

20 JANUARY 2026

Mr. Gerd Müller, Director General, UNIDO

Mr. Robert Floyd, Executive Secretary, CTBTO

Mr. John Brandolino, Acting Director-General of UNOV and Acting Executive Director of UNODC

Mr. Jacek Bylica-Kosmalski, Chief of Cabinet, IAEA

Ms. Anna Joubin-Bret, Secretary, UNCITRAL

Mr. Driss El Hadani, Deputy Director, UNOOSA

**Distinguished Ambassadors, members of Permanent Missions,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the handover ceremony of the Chairpersonship of the Group of 77 and China between Kenya and India. Your presence today reflects the enduring solidarity that defines this Group and our shared commitment to multilateral cooperation.

Allow me to extend warm congratulations to His Excellency, Ambassador Shambhu S. Kumaran, the Permanent Representative of India, on assuming the Chairpersonship. Ambassador, I have every confidence that your experience, dedication, and diplomatic acumen will guide the Group to even greater heights. You can count on my full support and that of my delegation as we continue to work together in a spirit of partnership and constructive engagement.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

When Kenya assumed this responsibility last year, we did so with humility and a deep sense of duty. It has been an honour and privilege to serve the Group under the able leadership of the indomitable Ambassador Maurice Makoloo, whose wisdom and dedication continue to inspire us. Guided by his vision, we approached our mandate with diligence and inclusivity—always striving to uphold the shared aspirations of developing countries.

During our tenure as Chair, the Group faced some of its most challenging moments. Yet these challenges strengthened rather than divided us. We listened, showed respect, sought understanding, and worked through consensus. As an African proverb reminds us, *“Wisdom grows with the*

counsel of many.” Indeed, through your support, we upheld the spirit of solidarity that binds the G77 and China. We are deeply grateful for the cooperation, solidarity, and constructive engagement extended to us, which made our tenure both meaningful and truly rewarding.

Kenya was fully cognizant of the global context of its Chairship, marked by unprecedented international and geopolitical tensions, increasing geopolitical fragmentation, financial constraints, and a weakening of commitment to multilateral norms and increasing pressure on the development agenda.

Against this backdrop, we set out to serve as a bridge-builder—connecting regions, cultures, and ideologies, by strengthening South-South cooperation, enhancing partnerships with the Global North, and deepening the Group’s engagement with the Vienna-based Organizations. Guided by these principles, we sought to foster collaboration, build consensus, and ensure that the collective voice of developing countries remained strong, coherent, and effective in addressing the pressing challenges of our time.

Among the highlights of our tenure were:

- **A Fellowship Reception** during which we also celebrated the **27th Anniversary of the Vienna Chapter**, fostering unity among members.
- Two G77–EU Dialogues—strengthening collaboration on political dialogue
- A High-Level Dialogue on Multilateralism, co-hosted with the EU and the Ban Ki-moon Centre for Global Citizens, reaffirming our collective commitment to cooperation.
- A high-level luncheon with UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed during the COPUOS session, providing valuable engagement with UN leadership.
- Regular plenary meetings with the heads of UNIDO, IAEA, CTBTO, and UNOOSA, ensuring that developing countries’ perspectives remained central in policy discussions.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 2025, the Group remained steadfast in pursuing its objectives, actively working to develop and project common positions on the thematic issues addressed by the Vienna-based Organizations. These efforts ensured that their work more effectively reflected the priorities of developing countries. Over the course of the year, the Group held more than 87 Task Force meetings, convened Nine (9) Plenary meetings, and delivered 29 statements across multiple governing bodies—demonstrating both the dedication and the collective impact of our collaborative efforts

More specifically, the Group continued advancing **UNIDO's** mandate on inclusive and sustainable industrial development by advocating for adequate regular-budget funding, swift implementation of audit recommendations, and equitable geographical representation.

The Group maintained strong engagement in the **IAEA's** work, especially on enhancing developing-country benefits from IAEA activities through Technical Cooperation Programme and flagship initiatives. Despite challenges, five G-77 draft resolutions were adopted at the last GC.

On **UNODC** matters, the Group advocated for stable, predictable, and sufficient funding to support technical assistance and capacity-building for developing countries amid the UN liquidity crisis and called for stronger international cooperation to fight corruption.

Within the **CTBTO**, the Group advocated for sufficient funding for capacity-building programmes in the 2026–2027 budget and safeguarded developing-country interests in operational matters. The Group supported Kenya's candidature for external auditor—an effort that led to its successful appointment.

The Group advocated for **COPUOS** as the relevant forum for space-related issues and promoting the role of peaceful uses of outer space in sustainable development and for sufficient funding and staffing for UNOOSA.

At **UNCITRAL**, the Group remained engaged in the Commission's work. As G-77 Chair, Amb. Maurice Makoloo participated as key note speaker in the conference “Shaping the Future” on trade finance, regional connectivity, and digital evolution, contributing to discussions that supported the adoption of the new instrument by the UN.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

These achievements were possible thanks to our dedicated Task Force Coordinators, whom I warmly acknowledge:

Mr. Khaled Elmenshawy (Egypt, UNIDO), Mr. Matheus Uller (Brazil, IAEA), Mr. Andrei Bauzon (Philippines, UNODC), Ms. Diana Kekan (Colombia, COPUOS), Mr. Nortin Titus (Namibia, CTBTO), and Mr. Erik Mangajaya (Indonesia, UNCITRAL). Your commitment and leadership were exemplary.

I also express heartfelt appreciation to Ms. Crosby Plaza Hernandez, our External Relations Officer, and her assistant Ms. Maria Fernanda Gonzales, for their professionalism and dedication, as well as to the interns—Ms. Ludi Taru, Ms. Moly Wemah, and Ms. Lingchen Wang—whose efforts ensured the smooth functioning of our office.

We are deeply grateful to UNIDO for its continued financial and administrative support to the G77 Office here in Vienna since its establishment in 1998. I encourage other Organizations and Member States to lend their support to this office ensuring that the voices of the developing world—representing 80% of humanity—continue to resonate effectively.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of my Government, I thank all members of the Group for the trust and partnership extended to Kenya during our Chairpersonship. We are proud to pass the baton to India, confident that the Group will continue to champion fairness, inclusivity, and solidarity in multilateral cooperation.

It is now my distinct pleasure to officially hand over the Chairpersonship of the Group of 77 and China, Vienna Chapter, for 2026, to His Excellency Ambassador Shambhu S. Kumaran, Permanent Representative of India.

I thank you.