



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA
BY H.E. DR. ABDALMAHMOOD ABDALHALEEM MOHAMAD,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE 47TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION
FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

(New York, 4 February 2009)

**Madame Chair,
Under Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs
Excellencies,
and distinguished Delegates.**

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Allow me to extend, on behalf of the Group, our warmest felicitations to you and the Bureau on your election to the 47th session of the Commission for Social Development.

The Group of 77 and China wishes to assure you of their support and cooperation during the proceedings of this important session which will focus on the Social Integration as a priority theme for the 2009-2010 review and policy cycle taking into account the relationship with poverty eradication and full employment and decent work for all. While also confirming the synergies that exist between MDGs and the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit, we hope that deliberations of this session on the theme "Social Integration" will provide substantive input and guidelines for all events and forthcoming sessions.

2. We recognize that we are meeting a critical juncture in our efforts to address the challenges of achieving the Internationally Agreed Development Goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. We further recognize that we face multiple challenges in our efforts to achieve these goals, including financial crisis, global food crisis, as well as the impacts of environmental degradation and climate change. We are thus concerned about the negative impacts of these risks on social development. We believe that these challenges require early and concentrated global action.

Madame Chair,

3. The World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen from 6 - 12 of March 1995, and the 24th special session of the General Assembly, defined the objective of Social Development in general and Social Integration in particular as the creation of "a society for all". Social Integration is the process of building the values, relations, and institutions essential for the creation of such an equitable and dynamic society, where all individuals, regardless of their race, sex, language, or religion, can exercise their rights and responsibilities on an equal basis with others and contribute to society.

4. The Group of 77 and China strongly believes that "Social Integration" is a prerequisite for creating harmonies, peaceful and inclusive societies, promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, promotion of culture of peace, tolerance and non-violence, respect for cultural and religions diversity, eliminations of all forms of discrimination, equal opportunities for access to productive resources and participatory governance important for Social Integration.

5. Since the World Summit for Social Development, international efforts to advance Social Integration have addressed the special needs of certain social groups. As a result, several new mandates and instruments have been adopted such as the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Although addressing the special needs of certain social group is critical to advancing their inclusion in the society, this falls short of the broad social integration paradigm endorsed by the World Summit for Social Development. The importance of an encompassing development strategy must be emphasized. At the national level, there have been numerous efforts to identify the risk factors of social exclusion and many governments have pursued policies aimed at combating such exclusion, often with a focus on the most marginalized groups or individuals.

Madame Chair,

6. A society for all is one in which people play an active role in peace and development, engaging in socially integrative processes that are guided by the fundamental principle of social justice. Participatory dialogue is a key catalytic mechanism in such process and should be part and parcel of building more cohesive societies.

7. In the current phase of globalization, labour markets have been evolving in the direction of greater levels of economic insecurity and greater levels of most inequity, many of which have a direct adverse effect on social cohesion. In the long term, situations of pervasive unemployment, underemployment or poverty generate social exclusion. Moreover, socio-demographic changes such as rapid urbanization, population ageing, increased migration and the break-up of the family structures pose particular challenges to social inclusion.

8. Exclusion has political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions. Economic aspects of exclusion encompass exclusion from the labour market and access to assets. Social and cultural aspects refer to exclusion from access to social services, means of communication, community and Family support or State protection. Such economic, social and cultural exclusion leads to political exclusion, where individuals are prevented from exercising their rights as citizens, including participation in decision making.

9. There is an increasing recognition by the Group of 77 and China that social exclusion is often seen in developing countries as a direct result of poverty, which hinders people's participation in economic, social and political sphere's of life. Beside poverty, other major causes of exclusion include income inequities, unequal rural-urban development, unequal distribution of assets, such as land; discrimination based in gender, race, disability and ethnicity, unequal access to social services; lack of social protection strategies; market failures.

Madame Chair,

10. The Group of 77 and China believes that the Social Integration of people living in poverty should begin by meeting their basic human needs, including nutrition, health, water and sanitation, housing and access to education and employment, through integrated development strategies while achieving full employment and decent work for all. So long as basic needs go unfulfilled, social integration cannot move forward. At the same time, it is necessary to empower people living in poverty by involving them in the planning, design, and implementation and monitoring of programmes for poverty eradication. Such programmes should respect the dignity

and culture of people living in poverty, use their skills, knowledge and creativity and assist them in getting organized and educated about their rights.

11. We believe that lack of access to social services, such as social protection, health, education and the persistence of poverty and unemployment, and inequitable access to opportunities resources have caused social exclusion and marginalization. Social policies should be transformative so as to address these challenges.

12. Advancing Social Integration requires comprehensive national strategies for promoting growth and equity through macroeconomic stability and sound public finances, accompanied by fair and progressive tax systems and social protection mechanisms. The task of Social Integration is not the responsibility of Governments alone but should be shared by all sectors of the economy and society at large, including the private sector and civil society organizations.

13. The obstacles to the realization of the right of peoples to self-determination, in particular of peoples living under colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation, have continued to adversely affect the achievement for their social and economic development.

14. The Group of 77 and China believes that in some countries, social development is still adversely affected by unilateral coercive measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that create obstacles to trade relations among States, impede the full realization of social and economic development and hinder the well-being of the population in the affected countries.

15. Given the crucial role of international cooperation in realizing the Internationally Agreed Development Goals including the MDGs and promoting the goal of Social Integration, the Group of 77 and China stresses that the international Community and development partners have an important role to play in collaborating with and supporting the developing countries in implementing their social development agenda. The fulfillment of developed countries of their commitments is crucial as it is also an imperative.

16. While there is no shortage of expressions of commitment, the challenges are to translate political commitments into action oriented programmes and policies to bring about concrete progress. Even with the most forward-looking domestic programmes in place, success will be jeopardized without a conducive international environment to support their realization. Enhanced international cooperation, including fulfillment of commitments of internationally agreed official development assistance, debt relief, market access and technical support, are critical to our efforts.

17. The International Community has, since 1994, undertaken a range of activities and commitments in support of the objectives of the International Year of the Family. Numerous Governments also have recognized the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and its follow-up as an important opportunity to strengthen and enhance family related policies and programmes. The 20th Anniversary of the IYF in 2014 is on the horizon, necessitating the efforts and initiatives of Governments, the United Nations system and Civil Society to ensure the further promotion, actual realization and continuous implementation of the mandated objectives of the International Year of the Family. We highly recommend that the Commission for Social Development consider the preparations for, and observance of, the 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, as a priority in its upcoming Programme of Work.

In conclusion Madame Chair

18. Poverty eradication, full employment and Social Integration are the three pillars along the path to sustainable human-centered development identified in 1995 by the World Summit for Social Development. To that end, it is most important to the Group of 77 and China that the process in which we are engaged formulates an outcome with a substantive set of actions and objectives that will provide strong policy direction to Member States and the international community that can be implemented at all levels. It should also have a result oriented action and a built-in follow-up mechanism that allows us to track our progress. The Group of 77 and China looks forward to genuinely contributing to that process.

Thank you, Madame Chair.