



**Statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China  
during the Thematic Debate at the 2009 ECOSOC Substantive Session  
(Geneva, 7 July 2009)**

Madame President,

I have the honor to make this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China to convey the views of our membership on the theme of "Current global and national trends and their impact on social development, including health".

It is our expectation that this thematic discussion during the High-level Segment of ECOSOC contribute optimally to the discussion held under Annual Ministerial Review. During our consultations to finalize the theme for this discussion as well as for the Annual Ministerial Review, the Group of 77 and China consistently maintained that we would like to see complementarities in discussion in between the two while avoiding duplication. This thematic debate, should undertake a normative and policy discussion of the issues related to the theme, while the exercise during the Annual Ministerial Review should review the facts and figures and analysis of implementation of commitments made by States, organizations and institutions under the MDGs and other Internationally Agreed Development Goals.

Madame President,

The world is in the midst of a severe economic and financial crisis. The exponential rise in food and fuel prices last year and continuous volatility of commodity prices have exacerbated the impact of the global economic crisis. Compounding the situation is the challenges of climate change. Irony is that developing countries and their poor populations are bearing the brunt of the crisis which is not of their making.

The economic slowdown is being rapidly transmitted through trade and macroeconomic imbalances. The crisis has already entered into real economy

affecting millions of households. Unemployment is rising in many developing countries, straining national budgets and putting pressure on household incomes. The hard earned gains of developing countries towards MDGs are already reversing. Millions of people have been pushed back into poverty. Decreasing Government revenues and increasingly difficult debt financing have limited options of public spending on social sectors.

The current trends are exacting heavy toll on the social and economic development. The crisis has come at a time when public health is at a crossroad.

Madame President,

Modern medicine has made huge advances, but these advances have benefited just a small percentage of the world's population---and almost exclusively in wealthier settings. Huge inequalities exist across countries and within countries. Inequalities in child and adult mortality are large and are growing. For an instance, a girl born today can expect to live for more than 80 years if she is born in some countries—but less than 45 years if she is born in others. Diseases like HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, which are treated with overwhelming success in affluent settings, are too often a death sentence for the poor. Inequities also exist within countries.

We are concerned over the fact that the current crisis could result in donor countries reducing the already scarce resources they allocate to Official Development Assistance (ODA) and that many countries will see a decrease in the international assistance they receive in support for social programmes, particularly on health services, training of human resources specialized in health, protection and social protection.

Madame President,

Any financial contraction by donor countries under the pretext of global financial crisis and continuing wavering on their earlier commitments would be detrimental to the achievement of Health related MDGs. We urge developed countries to make to fulfill their commitments.

The Right to Health is inextricably linked with the accessibility and affordability of medicine and treatment. The international community cannot allow denial of the right to health by patent holders who abuse intellectual property rights, particularly where they seek to restrain and unreasonably impose measures

that affect the supply chain of medicines and transfer of technology relating to health products.

In concluding, let's pose a central question: Can we achieve goal of health for all in this generation? If we continue as we are, the answer is No. But if there is a genuine desire for change, if there is a vision to create a better and fairer world then the answer is Yes. The goal requires urgent action and long term measures. At the centre of this action should be the principle of equity — equity for all.

I thank you.