



Statement by His Excellency the Honorable Mr. W. Baldwin Spencer  
Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Antigua and Barbuda  
Chairman of the Group of 77 and China

at the

High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on the  
Millennium Development Goals

*Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> September 2008, New York*

Mr. President,  
Mr. Secretary General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Representatives,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored and privileged to address the Assembly on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. At the outset allow me to convey to you Mr. President and to the members of the Bureau our congratulations on your election to lead the 63<sup>rd</sup> Session of the General Assembly. It will be a privilege to work under your direction.

The Group of 77 and China wishes to compliment the Secretary General on his timely initiative to convene this high level meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals.

These goals are the international community's initiative and commitment to ameliorating some of the sub-human conditions confronting humanity.

These were formulated with timeframes for achievement on the basis of our declaration and commitments in the Millennium Summit of 2000. They are structured into seven challenge areas.

However, the eighth is the enabling goal – the development of a global partnership for development. This goal brings together the responsibilities of developing countries and that of developed countries in a global partnership to facilitate implementation.

This Global Partnership was endorsed at the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey in 2002.

Most of the MDG's, including Goal 8, have a 2015 achievement target date. This event, at the halfway point, is both timely and important. It will provide a picture of where we are and what needs to be done to bring us on track. The documentation that we have before us clearly indicates that:

- Firstly, we are not on track and might be falling even further behind on meeting most of the MDG targets;
- Secondly, the main shortcoming is with the implementation of our commitments; and
- Thirdly, the main challenge to developing countries to fully implementing the commitments on the ground at the country level is the lack of financing and a more supportive international environment, indicating a significant failure of progress on MDG 8.

The Group of 77 and China proposes that in the high level review we focus on:

1. Action to implement already made commitments, especially under MDG 8; and
2. Set in motion a process to develop specific benchmarks and targets to properly measure the implementation of MDG 8 as is the case for the other seven MDG's. These benchmarks and targets could be developed for agreement in 2010 to guide our progress in the last 5 years.

The Group of 77 and China, in emphasizing the imperative of achieving the MDG's on time, would like to remind us that:

- The targets for most of the MDG's are not to eradicate or eliminate the particular challenge but to reduce the extent of suffering and deprivation;
- The MDG's do not address the scope of the development agenda of the developing countries or the range of challenges identified in the Internationally Agreed Development Goals from the major conferences and summits. They are below the development platform.
- The current global crises relating to food, energy and failures of economic and financial systems and the resultant inflammatory pressures will impact most severely on the poorest and most disadvantaged groups in the developing countries - the targets of the MDG's. The cost of meeting the MDG's is increasing and will continue to increase at a faster pace with time.

Given the urgency of action and the importance of our conclusions in this High Level Meeting to billions of people mainly in developing countries around the world, the Group of 77 and China had proposed and would have liked to see our deliberations, including in the roundtables, captured in an agreed declaration.

We accept, with reluctance, that time did not make this possible. We expect however that after 10 years and with 5 years to go to the target date we will have a final major review in 2010 and a final adjustment in our speed of implementation to ensure overall achievement of the targets.

The Group of 77 and China proposes that we use that opportunity to organize our deliberations and actions into a coherent declaration or targeted plan of action to enable the tracking of our progress.

Failure in 2015 is not an option we can afford.

Thank you.