

**STATEMENT BY MR. YASHWANT SINHA, MINISTER OF EXTERNAL  
AFFAIRS AT THE TWENTY SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFIARS OF THE GROUP OF 77 ON  
SEPTEMBER 25, 2003**

Mr.Chairman,

I would like to felicitate Morocco for the excellent leadership it has provided since January 2003. Morocco helped us focus on key issues of concern to developing countries and facilitated G-77 solidarity in action.

2. I also take this opportunity to welcome our incoming Chairman, Qatar. We wish Qatar a productive tenure and look forward to a constructive engagement with it in the pursuit of our common goals and objectives.

Mr.Chairman,

3. The past year has witnessed several challenges for the developing countries. The world economy has not yet recovered from its slow-down registered in 2001. The heightened geopolitical uncertainties of late 2002 and early 2003 continue to pose a downside risk to global economic growth. Both world trade and FDI flows lack dynamism, reflecting and contributing to the overall weakness in the world economy. This has exacerbated the difficulties of the developing countries by limiting their capacity to meet the development challenges that confront them. Equally, the past two years have seen a forceful reassertion of the global economic inter-dependence and we need to ensure that the concerns of developing countries are fully taken into account by the international community. In this context, I would like to stress importance of

achieving greater equity in international economic relations and greater voice for the developing countries in the decision-making structures in the international trade, monetary and financial institutions.

4. We are disappointed that the Fifth Ministerial meeting at Cancun failed to produce an agreement that would have addressed the interests and concerns of the developing countries. A rule-based multilateral trading regime is obviously best for all countries. But this should represent a fair balance of interests of all countries, not just a few. The solidarity, cohesion and determination shown by the developing countries in defending their vital national interests was unprecedented. Of course, we need to be aware that there could be increased pressures on the developing countries to agree to further concessions. The developing countries need to be able to retain their unity of purpose and solidarity that we were able to demonstrate in Cancun, when faced with such pressures.

5. Against this background, we need to strengthen UNCTAD which is the focal point for consensus building and trade and development issues, and enhance its capacity to assist developing countries in respect of trade policies, diversification and national strategies and building up international competitiveness and to enable it to play an important role in integrating the development dimension into the international legal framework and rules on trade.

6. The challenges posed by globalisation demand a high degree of unity and solidarity among the developing countries. The Millennium Development Goals may not by themselves constitute a comprehensive development plan, they are a measurable set of benchmarks which could provide indications of whether the world is moving towards a more inclusive and equitable globalization called for in the Declaration. The challenge is to translate the commitments that have been undertaken into concrete actions so that the internationally agreed development goals are achieved. We also need to focus on the implementation of the outcomes for the Monterrey Conference and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. We hope that follow-up mechanisms put in place would afford us with an opportunity to comprehensively review the implementation of the outcomes. We need to focus on ensuring that the developed countries fulfill their

commitments to make available financial and technological resources to the developing countries.]

Mr.Chairman,

7. At the Havana Summit, the developing countries had identified broad priorities to map out a better future for our countries. We welcome the progress made so far in the implementation of the Programme of Action. This agenda however needs to be pursued with greater vigour. The upcoming High-Level Conference on South South Cooperation to review the progress achieved is timely. This Conference should provide an opportunity for reaffirmation of our priorities. We believe that there are a large number of areas in which developing countries can assist each other.

8. India remains fully committed to extending technical, economic and scientific assistance in substantial measure to developing countries. India's various technical and economic cooperation programmes, including the ITEC Programme , cover 154 countries, and India spends about US \$ 200 million annually on these activities. Over the past five decades, India has provided over US \$ 3 billion worth of technical assistance to developing countries in four broad fields – civil and military training to promote capacity building and human resource development, deputation of experts to work with other governments, setting up of projects, organization of study tours by senior officials from abroad, and humanitarian and disaster relief, principally through supply of food grains and medicines. Over 6000 representatives of developing countries undergo training or study in over 250 Indian universities and institutions annually. The scope of the training programmes is very broad, covering subjects such as parliamentary studies, diplomacy, administration, accounting, audit and banking, mass communications, rural development. English language teaching and information technology, India stands ready to expand such programmes and share our experience with fellow-developing countries.

9. The Fortieth Anniversary of the establishment of the Group of 77, to be commemorated in June 2004, would be an important landmark. The G-77 has

rendered valuable service to developing countries. We have to remain engaged in a continuous process to forge common positions and to push the concerns of the developing countries to the forefront of the international economic and trade agenda. I reiterate India's full support and involvement in this effort.

Thank you.

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