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**Sectoral policy questions: preventing and combating corrupt practices and transfer of funds of illicit origin and returning such assets to the countries of origin**

**Sustainable development and international economic cooperation**

**Environment and sustainable development**

**Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development**

**Operational activities for development**

**Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)**

**Globalization and interdependence**

**Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries**

**Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources**

**Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development**

**Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly**

**Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family**

**Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations**

**Programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003**

**Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005**

**Improving the financial situation of the United Nations**

**Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations**

**Human resources management**

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**Letter dated 1 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative  
of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the  
Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Ministerial Declaration adopted on the occasion of the Twenty-seventh Annual Meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 and China, held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 25 September 2003 (see annex).

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would highly appreciate it if you could arrange for the present letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly under agenda items 12, 23, 37, 38, 39, 45, 47, 49, 50, 55, 57, 58, 59, 60, 86, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 97, 98, 100, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 119, 120, 121, 123, 124 and 127.

*(Signed)* Mohamed **Bennouna**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco  
to the United Nations  
Chairman of the Group of 77

**Annex to the letter dated 1 October 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

**MINISTERIAL DECLARATION**

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 and China, guided by the principles and objectives of the United Nations Charter and by the provisions of the Havana Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the South Summit, convened at the Twenty-seventh Annual Meeting at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 25 September 2003, adopted the following declaration:

1. We welcome the admission of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste as a full member of the Group of 77.



15. We emphasize the importance of an open, rule-based multilateral trading system for the promotion of economic

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### ***Sustainable Development***

22. We reaffirm our commitment to the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and stress the importance of economic development, social development and environmental protection as interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development. To this end we urge developed countries and relevant major groups to fulfil their commitment to the full and expeditious implementation of the targets and goals set in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

23. We underscore the importance of the Commission on Sustainable Development as the high-level forum for sustainable development within the United Nations. We welcome the outcome of the Commission's eleventh session held from 28 April to 9 May 2003, in particular the new programme of work and organizational modalities. We underscore that the programme of work of the Commission should advance the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

24. We note the outcomes of the recently held meetings of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), and the Sixth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (COP-6). In this context, we emphasize the importance of providing adequate financial resources, capacity building, technology innovation and transfer to developing countries and cooperation with other relevant instruments particularly the biodiversity, desertification, and climate change conventions.

25. We note with grave concern that the HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to constitute a global emergency, which undermines social and economic development throughout the world, particularly in developing countries. We emphasize the need to have an urgent, coordinated and sustained global response to address the epidemic through prevention, treatment and care. We strongly support the "Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS" adopted at the Twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly, and call for its immediate implementation. We welcome the United Nations high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS in this regard. We reaffirm the right of developing countries to have access to affordable medicine, including anti-retroviral medicine, to combat the epidemic and, in this context, emphasize that international rules on intellectual property rights should not prevent developing countries from designing and implementing national public health policies to protect their populations. In this regard, we are encouraged by the decision reached recently on the issue of access to medicines by WTO members with insufficient or no manufacturing capacities in the pharmaceutical sector. We also welcome the efforts by the international community, including the recent G8 initiative in this regard and the Fifteenth International Conference on HIV/AIDS to be held in Thailand in 2004, to address effectively the urgency and gravity of the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

26. We stress vigorously the need to promote access to and transfer of knowledge and technology to developing countries, including information and communication technology. We welcome the convening by United Nations of the World Summit on the Information Society, to be held in two stages: Geneva 2003 and Tunisia 2005. We regard this as a unique occasion for all the key actors of the international community to develop a common approach towards the use of information technologies for the benefit of development and to attain a better understanding of this technological revolution and its social, cultural and economic impact. The need to abridge the digital gap, for equitable access to information and expertise, for further involvement of our countries in a transparent and democratic management system of the global information network and the convenience of achieving consensus on ethical standards and principles instrumental in the development of a genuine information society, stand among the major challenges to be dealt with.

### ***Social Development***

27. We reiterate the crucial importance of achieving the internationally agreed goals of social development, in particular those identified in the World Summit for Social Development, including through an increased and untied assistance from the international community for this purpose. We believe that the international community bears the responsibility to

fulfil its commitments and implement the adopted decisions, in order to achieve the social development goals for the well being of the present and future generations.

*The Programme of Action for the Least-developed Countries*

28. We note with deep concern the weak implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 and call upon the international community to fully implement it. We urge the developed countries, bilateral and multilateral donors to honour their commitments in this regard in order to assist the Least-Developed countries in their development efforts. We also urge developed countries and international financial institutions to intensify support for national poverty reduction strategies.



international community to assist developing countries in their efforts to reduce poverty globally during the First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty.

34. We welcome the setting up in February 2003 of the World Solidarity Fund (WSF) as a trust fund of UNDP to contribute to the eradication of poverty and invite the UNDP Administrator to take further measures to operationalize the Fund by establishing on an urgent basis the high-level committee to define the strategy of the Fund and to mobilize the financial resources. In this regard, we stress the role of Governments, civil society and private sector in mobilizing resources for the World Solidarity Fund.

35. We welcome the fact that the Group of 77 in Vienna has developed a common position on issues of central significance to the negotiation of a Convention against Corruption and is actively involved in the negotiation

41. We welcome the decision taken by the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification at its sixth session in Havana, designating GEF as a financial mechanism of the Convention and call upon the United Nations to declare 2004 as the International Year of Deserts and Desertification with the view to raising awareness on the phenomenon of desertification and protecting biodiversity of deserts as well as indigenous and local communities and traditional knowledge of affected countries.

### *South-South Cooperation*

42. We recognize the increased relevance of South-South cooperation in the current international economic climate. We, therefore, reiterate our support for South-South cooperation both as a strategy in support of the development efforts of the developing countries and as a means of enhancing participation of developing countries in the emerging global economy. We affirm the importance of strengthening South-South Cooperation in the UN System, including funds and programmes and specialized agencies involved in South-South cooperation and, in this regard, we support the strengthening of the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation and we call on the UNDP to provide the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation with necessary support to enable it to fulfil its mandate.

43. We welcome the offer made by the Kingdom of Morocco to host the High-level Conference on South-South cooperation in Marrakech from 16 to 19 December 2003 in accordance with the Havana Programme of Action and call developing countries to participate actively at ministerial level in order to ensure success of the Conference. We consider the High-level Conference on South-South Cooperation an important landmark in our collective effort to increase the momentum and intensity of development cooperation. In this context, we welcome the regional preparatory meetings as well as the initiative of holding a forum of NGOs and private sector on the occasion of the Conference.

44. We welcome the initiative taken by the Asian-African Sub-regional Organizations Conference (AASROC) in Bandung, Indonesia, from 29-30 July 2003 to establish a New Strategic Partnership for promoting South-South cooperation.

49. We approve the Financial Statement of the ECDC Account of the Group of 77 (G-77/AM(XV)/2003/5). We express concern over the precarious financial situation of the ECDC Account and the fact that since the Havana Summit only 37 countries have paid their contributions in full. In this context, we appeal to all member States of the Group of 77 to contribute generously to the ECDC Account as decided by the South Summit in order to support the implementation of the annual programme of work of the Group of 77 and to ensure continuity of the smooth functioning of the Office of the Chairman.

50. We approve the report of the First Special Meeting of the Committee of Experts of the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund for ECDC/TCDC (PGTF) (G-77/AM(XV)/2003/2) and the Report of the Eighteenth Meeting of the Committee of Experts of the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund for ECDC/TCDC (G-77/AM(XV)/2003/3), which were presented in accordance with the guidelines for the utilization of PGTF. We note with satisfaction the progress made so far by the PGTF in support of South-South cooperation projects and call upon all members of the Group of 77 as well as the United Nations system to support the expansion of resources of the Trust Fund. We commend the Chairman of the Committee of Experts for his continued commitment and leadership in the Fund's activities.

### *Situation in Palestine and the Middle East*

51. We remain gravely concerned over the tragic and dangerous situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, which has resulted in the grave deterioration of the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian people, and has negatively affected stability and development in the region as a whole. We call for the immediate and complete cessation and end to settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and in the occupied Syrian Golan and end to the recent Israeli occupation and siege of Palestinian cities, towns and villages, which are in violation of international law, relevant United Nations resolutions and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, and all forms of collective punishment against the Palestinian people, as well as the return to the negotiation table. We also call for the immediate Israeli withdrawal from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and from the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967, and from all the other Arab occupied territories. We reaffirm our support to the Palestinian people in their effort to achieve their inalienable rights, including their right to establish an independent state on their national soil, including Jerusalem.

52. We reaffirm our support for the Middle East peace process started in Madrid in 1991, and aimed at achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and the principle of land for peace. In this context, we support the peace initiative adopted by the Arab Summit in Beirut in March 2002.

53. We call for the full implementation of the Roadmap Peace Plan for the Israeli-Palestinian track by the concerned parties.

54. We support the inalienable rights of Lebanon to utilize its waters in accordance with international law and in particular to ensure the social and economic needs of its population in the liberated areas and villages. We also call on Israel to end its air violations of Lebanese sovereignty and other violations that severely damage the security situation which is a critical factor in promoting the tourism industry and the economy.

### *Strengthening of the United Nations*

55. We believe that the strengthening of the United Nations and its role in international cooperation for development is essential to respond to current and future challenges and opportunities emanating from the process of globalization. We are of the view that the United Nations needs to improve its capabilities and capacities. In this regard, we welcome the efforts by the Secretary-General to strengthen the centrality of the United Nations in international affairs, and support a constructive debate among all Member States on the reform of the United Nations.

56. We reaffirm the legal obligation of all member states to bear the financial expenses of the UN, in accordance with the Charter, and urge all member states to pay assessed contributions on time, in full and without conditions. We further recognize the need to extend sympathetic understanding to those Member States that temporarily may not be able to meet their financial obligations as a consequence of genuine economic difficulties.

57. We reiterate the importance of the forthcoming negotiations of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 and stress that the resources to be approved by the General Assembly should be commensurate with the mandated programmes and activities including those in the economic, social and developmental areas, and ensure their full and effective implementation.