

Excellencies,

To begin with I would like to thank all of you for everything we have achieved in the year that has passed. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Mrs. Suzanne Giometti, and the past and present G77 & China Consultants, Ben Myers, Sabina Bekto, Tim Ellis, Tariq Kazemi and Bernadette Mukonroya, as well as the interns Pamela Alvarez, David Bevan and Ivan Cutuli, who have been of enormous help.

In order to truly appreciate our success, we must bear in mind the challenges we have faced. I am proud we have been able to foster the spirit of unity, remained flexible and displayed our vision to the outside world.

I will look back on 2007 as a memorable year, not only for me, but for the whole Rome Chapter of G77 & China, and I hope you will allow me to indulge in some of the reasons for our success.

1. In February, the Rome chapter played host to the G77 & China from all chapters with The 41<sup>st</sup> Meeting of Chairmen/Coordinators of the Group of 77 and China. The meeting was a great success. The Group focused on UN reforms, with widespread agreement that reforms should strengthen the organization's role in promoting effective multilateralism, improving democratic decision making and transparency whilst safeguarding the principle of sovereign equality of Member States. Future challenges were rightly acknowledged but the South-South Cooperation was identified as the arena offering the most exciting opportunities for the Group. There is widespread agreement that the economic dynamics of the South argue well for our collective self reliance through trade, investment and technological cooperation.

2. In a similar vein, there has been a push to embolden regular communication between the Rome and the chair in New York this year and as a result, a stronger coalition has emerged between the two. I feel it is vital that the Rome Chapter keep abreast of goings-on in New York as their political decisions affect us all. We have had productive discussions on the role of UNDP in relation to the Specialized Agencies and we have highlighted the need for Specialized Agency priority in the upcoming 2007 TCPR resolution.

In 2007 we have achieved a lot because of the unprecedented level of solidarity; in CCLM we held a common G77 and China position on Tuna Fish, we supported the fishery regulation of small vessels during the fisheries meeting and during the Agriculture Committee, a position of support for Agrarian Reforms was reached. Furthermore, for the IEE and the budget, we achieved the best result for 13 years, thanks in part to the favourable level of TCP's and a commitment, amongst all of us, to get the best from the IEE and realise its potential.

Now regarding administration and finances, this year, the contributions of 52 Euro per member have helped hold a reception at the 41<sup>st</sup> meeting of the G77 and China in addition to funding Ambassador of Mali's farewell drinks function. More importantly, as many of you know, this year we set up a multilateral trust fund in order to hire bright young people as consultants to aid the G77. The contributions so far have come from the UK with a donation of 75 thousand USD, 25 thousand USD from the OPEC fund, with 25 more to come in March and 30 thousand USD from Germany. The G77 and China consultants have conducted insightful research for us on issues such as bio fuels, climate change, gender, trade, food security and sustainable development. They also summarise

key documents for all of the Rome based agencies and I cannot tell you how helpful these summaries have been to me and other members who have used them. Equally invaluable was their help at Conference, and I hope others among you were able to take advantage of their abilities. The work we have in Rome can be overwhelming for the small delegations, and this year, logistically, we have worked better because of our ability to hire the highly educated consultants. I urge that my successor continue lobbying for replenishment of the fund and a continuation of the consultants programme.

Now at the end of an exhilarating, eventful, and sometimes exhausting year, I have learnt so much, and if you will allow me, I would like to identify some of the upcoming challenges we face.

The IEE is an immediate which we will address, but I think we all agree it is a huge opportunity, and a united G77 and China will help this Organization prosper. We must continue presenting arguments with one voice at all 3 Rome agencies on issues that are critical and which we all share. Early warning systems for natural disasters, geographical distribution and gender issues, and development programmes. Alongside economies, technologies and politics, we have witnessed the globalisation of world problems. Take the increasing relevant issues of climate change and environmental shifts. Our environmental problems are mounting, burdening our economies, and the truth is that turning the environmental situation around will require something far more difficult than setting targets and spending money, it will require revolutionary and bottom up political and economic reforms. Our problems do not respect international boundaries and political sovereignties, why should we let our solutions be confined by them? It is up to us the member countries, the custodians of this organisation, to promote a proactive, transparent UN. We hear the talk of free - trade, regulation, development, but who is going to set the standards?

An effective G77 and China can safeguard and advance a UN which sets acceptable international standards and guidelines on all these issues, through partnerships and operations, based on intellectual rigidity, and objective foundations.

Now, at the end of my chairmanship, I really do feel we have continued on the progressive course set by previous chairs, and laid additional foundations for the future. We are in an exciting time of change, worldwide, and particularly here, let us support each other, so we can present a coherent and powerful agenda to the rest of the membership, and guarantee the interests of the worlds poorest are served by this organisation.

Thank you