GROUP OF 77 & CHINA
GENEVA

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Pisanu Chanvitan
On behalf of the G77 and China Preparatory Committee
At the Preparatory Committee of UNCTAD XIII
13 April 2012
Room XXVI, Palais des Nations

Mr. President,
Excellencies and Distinguished Colleagues
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is with deep regret that I make this intervention because it means the current situation warrants some very candid words from the Group of 77 and China. It means that we have reached the point where high diplomacy - the finest diplomacy - is needed. It also means that the time for candor is needed more than ever. I will therefore be clear and candid.

Mr. President.

2. While we have always held firmly to our principles, the Group of 77 and China has tried to be as flexible as possible on how we have articulated them in our various negotiations in UNCTAD. Throughout our preparations for the Conference, we have felt that perhaps our constructiveness was viewed as weakness, and our accommodation viewed as capitulation.

3. As a result, some of our partners regressed to behaviour perhaps more appropriate for the founding days of UNCTAD, when countries of the North felt they could dictate and marginalize developing countries from informed decision-making. I have to be blunt and single out the handling of the JIU issue by one coordinator as reminiscent of the darkest days of the North-South divide.

4. It is therefore of no comfort that we have seen strong opposition from our partners for one of the central themes running through the work and engagement of our Group: that the global economic and financial crisis marks for once and for all the end of the bad old days, and perhaps the dawn of an international regime of global economic governance based on the highest principles and ideals of the United Nations, including sovereignty, equality, and mutual respect. Instead, we see behaviour that seems to indicate a desire for the dawn of a new neocolonialism. We cannot, we will not, accept this.

5. Mr. President.

6. We firmly believe that UNCTAD XIII can be a contribution to a new beginning. We firmly believe that the theme of development-centered globalization presents an opportunity to articulate a vision of development based on equality, based on a differentiated approach to development, and based on equal respect for all. We still believe this is possible.

7. Unfortunately, despite being the beneficiaries and the demandeurs, we feel increasingly marginalized by our partners especially when they seem to deny us our own priorities. Perhaps this is partly our own fault. Perhaps, in our desire for consensus, we have accommodated too much and this good faith was misunderstood, and abused. Perhaps this should end now.

Mr. President.

8. Allow me to close by making one thing clear. Our development partners may have mistakenly thought that the question that confronts us today is whether or not we will have an outcome document. Mr President, let me assure our partners that there WILL be an outcome document. The question is whether our partners will be able to recapture the positive spirit with which we embarked on this endeavor, and hence lead us to the consensus document we all want.

9. We therefore hope, Mr. President, that our partners will resume engaging in a positive spirit and the outcome will be a good consensus we can all be proud of.

10. On the other hand, let us also be comforted by the reality that at least one group will have an outcome document it will be happy with.

11. The Accra Accord must be reaffirmed and then we build upon it. The Group has exercised utmost flexibility and has made incredible compromises – sacrificing issues which are very important to the growth and development of us developing countries. And at this juncture, the minimum the Group can live with is the distilled text by the President and his friends of the Chair.

12. Thank you Mr. President.

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