

**OPENING REMARKS BY H.E. STAFFORD NEIL
CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77
AT THE SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING OF THE SECOND SOUTH SUMMIT
Doha, Qatar, 12 June 2005**

H.E. Ambassador Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar to the United Nations, New York
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank you Mr Ambassador for your warm words of welcome and to say that it is a great pleasure for us to be gathering here in Doha. We have been looking forward and preparing for some time for this occasion. Let me from the outset express the deep appreciation of the G77 to the State of Qatar for graciously offering to host the Second Summit. We regard it as a significant contribution and gesture of solidarity. The Summit provides an excellent opportunity for Heads of State and Government and Ministers to interact and consult on issues of the day and decide on common positions. We thank you for the generous arrangements and for the hospitality extended to us. With all of these excellent preparations we are confident that the meeting will be a success.

I see many familiar faces from New York and from the respective capitals. Let me join in welcoming all of you to this meeting. It is my hope that we will be able to complete the work we have been engaged in for the past few months and that we will be able to see more of your great country before the end of the Summit. But before we can do this, we must complete the preparation of the outcome documents. I wish to draw attention to three objectives which I believe should guide our discussions:

1. Completing our work in a timely manner

It is imperative that we complete our work within the allotted time frame if we are to fulfill the mandate given to us by the Ministers and the Heads of State and Government. We cannot fail in this respect. Efficiency and cooperation should be the hallmarks for our deliberations in the respective working groups. I therefore urge delegations to proceed with this approach in mind in order we can complete negotiations on the outcome documents by the end of the day. I have every confidence that we will be able to do so.

2. Preserving the Unity and Solidarity of the Group

The meeting is an important opportunity to demonstrate unity. The principle of mutual respect and solidarity has always guided the work of the G77. It has been the mainstay of the Group's existence even in the most challenging of

circumstances. That spirit has enabled us to make difficult and uncomfortable choices as individual delegations in order to ensure the Group remains united in its pursuit to advance the collective will of its membership. I have no doubt that this ability to find compromises while strengthening commitment to the principles which have inspired and sustained the G77 since its inception over 40 years ago. I am confident that this will continue to guide our deliberations within the working groups.

3. Strengthening the position of the G77

The outcome documents of the Summit along with the summaries emanating from the interactive dialogue among the Heads of State and Government should serve to strengthen the position of the G77 in the multilateral arena. This will be particularly crucial in 2005. As we prepare for the 60 th session of the General Assembly and the impending consultations on the outcome document of the President of the General Assembly, we have to be firm, bold and clear in our articulation of the views and concerns of developing countries. Our role as Senior Officials will be to provide our Heads with advice on the policy guidelines that can advance our interests in the multilateral fora.

It is in this spirit that I have prepared and circulated a draft Working Paper with broad policy prescriptions on the development cluster of the proposed outcome document of the President of the General Assembly for the High-level Plenary Meeting to be held in September. There is already a lot of momentum for change at the United Nations and we must ensure that advancing the development agenda remains at the forefront of the debates and decisions to be undertaken. While here in Doha, we must avail ourselves of the opportunity to advance this objective and to ensure that the G77 is fully equipped to take on the challenges of this very critical year. The comprehensive nature of the outcome documents provides an important medium for this purpose.

With these words, I encourage you to work assiduously towards a successful outcome in both working groups. I thank you.