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STATEMENT BY MR. NIRUPAM SEN, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, AT
THE HANDOVER CEREMONY OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE GROUP OF
77 ON JANUARY 11, 2008

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, let me join others in conveying greetings and warm wishes to Your Excellency Mr. Prime Minister and to Antigua and Barbuda on your election as the Chairman of the Group of 77 for the year 2008. We are confident that you will enjoy a very fruitful and productive tenure as our Chair. Allow me to underline India's full support to you and your team in all your efforts to promote and project the interests of developing countries. Such strength as India has is with you always.

I would also like to felicitate Ambassador Munir Akram and his team for ably articulating the views and concerns of this Group. Mr. Prime Minister, you have rightly emphasized unity. As the recent meetings in Bali have demonstrated yet again, a united G-77 is essential to ensure that the voice of developing countries is effectively heard. It is to our credit that despite our diverse concerns and sensitivities, the Group has been successful in projecting common positions, which takes into account the concerns of all countries, including Small and Island States. For us it is a

matter of special satisfaction that a Small Island Developing State of the Caribbean has taken over the Chairmanship of this Group.

The priorities of the United Nations sometimes appear to be sub-optimal because of the developed countries disproportionate control of both resources and decision making. The G-77 therefore has a vital historic role not only to resist but to transform, not just to hold the line but to be pro-active. In our work in New York, we cannot hold firm if we give ear to rumours, a weapon of those who wish to erode our solidarity. Let us go by deeds, not hearsay. Sometimes pressure may be used and wherever there is the probability of pressure, we can stiffen resolve and reinforce strength through economic and technological assistance where possible and political solidarity where necessary. Very rarely even if difficulties are overwhelming and an issue dear to us is likely to be dead meat, let us at least not supply the carving knives.

The Secretary General and the representative of Suriname rightly referred to the Right to Development. Partly thanks to the G-77 this has become an established Right. At the beginning, the Right was dismissed as "a letter to Santa Claus". If this was so, then obviously Santa Claus was an honorary member of the G-77. The working group in Geneva came to the conclusion that the performance of WTO and the Bretton Woods Institutions should be examined from the point of view of this Right. We cannot be pro-active and transform unless we act boldly on economic matters. In the context of climate change, MDGs and economic development, we would have to give an impetus to the reform of the Bretton Woods Institutions (using the oversight role of ECOSOC and Resolution 61/16 as a beginning); influence the trade agenda and address the inequities of the IPR regime. Let us try to be firm and proactive in formulations and resolutions designed to achieve these objectives.

This organization sometimes has skewed priorities. During the Budget negotiations, a representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) had told the Fifth Committee that they did not need any more posts or resources. The Under Secretary General, DESA, has just told us authoritatively that they do. He called DESA the 'least developed' part of the Secretariat. In fact, he spoke almost like a member of G-77. The least we can do is to give him these resources so that DESA can graduate from being the least developed to being the most rapidly developing part of the Secretariat. There is core funding for peacekeeping and human rights but not for development. The successful struggle over

the Budget therefore was not just for the Budget but to restore the values and character of this organization itself. We seldom recognize the quality and contribution of our delegates to this success. Let me therefore express my appreciation of Minister Imtiaz Hussain. He listened carefully to all opinions in the Group, contributed to unity and combined a knowledge and grasp of detail with unwavering firmness of articulation. This remains the formula for our success.

During 2008, proposals relating to important reform items, including strengthening of the UN Secretariat's development architecture, Department of Political Affairs, and those pertaining to human resources management, Procurement, ICT, ERP etc, would be presented by the Secretary-General to Member States. As in the past, we have to remain vigilant to ensure that the outcome of deliberations on these proposals is favorable to the developing countries. Needless to say, the unity of the Group of 77 would be of paramount importance in ensuring this objective.

We stand to make significant gains through unity and cohesion. We must not underestimate our position - the world economy has continued with steady growth in the recent past due mainly to growth in the developing world. The real challenge is to broad-base and sustain this growth. Allow me to recall G-77's special role in promoting and fostering South-South cooperation. India has been active in sharing its developmental experiences and expertise, and we remain ready to expand such cooperation with our developing country partners in future as well.

Sometimes there may be even heated discussions but it is a law of physics that amplitude is directly proportional to temperature: high temperature also means high amplitude. As you had said Mr. Prime Minister, G-77 is frequently able to propose effective solutions because diversity is our strength. It is precisely because it springs from this diversity of opinion that what we propose is rational and optimal. And it should be accepted. If the economic *status quo* that marked the closing years of the 20th century continues deep into the 21st century it would simply worsen security for all. As the poet says: "The One remains, the Many change and pass". We come and go but the Group remains. Therefore, above everything else is solidarity. When we go out of the door, we may sometimes be strangers among strangers but here inside in this Group we are always friends among friends.

We know your Ambassador Mr. Prime Minister from his work on sustainable development and his Chairmanship of the Fifth Committee. We have every confidence in his ability. Let me reiterate our best wishes to Antigua and Barbuda for the challenging journey ahead, as well as our whole-hearted support to it in pursuit of our common goals and objectives.

Thank You.

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