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**STATEMENT BY H.E DR. JAMES ALEX MSEKELA AMBASSADOR AND  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF  
TANZANIA AT THE G77 CHINA HANDOVER CEREMONY  
GENEVA, 17<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2018**

**Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary General of UNCTAD,  
Mr. Vicente Yu, Deputy Executive Director South Centre,  
Amb. Farukh Amil, Vice Chair of G77 and China,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates.**

1. I have the honour to welcome you to the Handover Ceremony of the Chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China. At the outset allow me to begin by presenting you with our best wishes for the New Year 2018. We are meeting today to welcome the new Chair of the Group of 77 and China, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

**Excellencies,**

2. You will recall that, a year ago, Tanzania was given the honour of chairing the Group of 77 and China, and we took such responsibility to heart. Before passing the gavel to the new Chair today, I wish to convey my Government's sincere appreciation to all Members of the Group, for the unwavering support and guidance given to us throughout our tenure as Chair.

**Excellencies,**

3. I would also like to extend our deepest appreciation to Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, the Secretary General of UNCTAD and his staff for their dedicated support over the course of the past year. We have steadily forged increasingly closer ties with UNCTAD and I believe that through working together we have restored much of the special relationship between UNCTAD and the Group of 77 and China in Geneva.
4. Once again, I wish to single out for thanks to the dedicated staff of the Group Liaison Unit – Ms. Yan He, Ms. Mispa Ewene, Ms. Rima Kebbe, Ms. Yvette Fernandez for their steadfast assistance to the group. I also wish to extend our appreciation to the former Group Liaison Chief Mr. Miguel Bautista who during his time provided invaluable support to our Group, moreover we look forward to getting his replacement as soon as possible to continue steering the group work.

### **Excellencies,**

5. As I handover the Chairmanship, I can't help but feel proud of what we as a group have accomplished over the past year. I am confident that we will achieve even more in this year under the good leadership of my successor.
6. I need not remind colleagues that UNCTAD is our organization, established Fifty Three Years ago to fulfil the demands of developing countries in confronting obstacles and trade barriers at international level, to realize their economic potential. It is an organization borne out of the Group of 77 and China. This gives UNCTAD a very special place in our Group.
7. UNCTAD remains an important organisation to us even today because 53 years after its founding, the conditions that existed then, such as the lack of an enabling environment, the imbalances, the vulnerabilities, the lack of resilience to external shocks, still to this day threaten all of us.

8. It is true that some of us have developed and we have created our own institutions and our own safety nets, yet we still live in a world where the ideas, institutions, and systems of the North dominate the trade and development system that we are all supposed to benefit from. We still do not have the level playing field that we set out to establish 53 years ago. In other words, the Group of 77 and China still needs a well-functioning UNCTAD and the UNCTAD needs a stable and well organised Group of 77 and China.

### **Excellencies,**

9. In 2017 we embarked on the implementation of the Nairobi Maafikiano. I believe what the Group accomplished in the past year laid the foundation for our success in the years ahead. Although the Tanzania Chairmanship was one filled with challenges, I believe our Group achieved much in what was a banner year in the field of development. We started 2017 preparing the Terms of Reference for the establishment of the two important Intergovernmental Expert Groups namely Financing for Development and E-Commerce and Digital Economy. Negotiations for the TORs were lengthy but we managed to secure balanced TORs for both working groups and most importantly resorted to have agreed negotiated outcome of our experts from these meetings.
10. The group also participated actively in Working Party negotiations throughout the year, the multi-year expert meetings, in the commissions and of course the 64<sup>th</sup> Session of the Trade and Development Board (TDB). During the TDB session the Group tabled a proposal for the first time on agreed conclusions/resolution for all agenda items of the Trade and Development Board. Although partners rejected the proposed resolution, the group succeeded to insert the proposal on the report of the Trade and Development Board. Also the

64<sup>th</sup> Session approved the proposal to shift the Trade and Development Board to June to allow better linkages with New York dialogue and high level participation.

### **Excellencies,**

11. There were other accomplishments, which I believe have enhanced our negotiating capacity and strengthened our group unity. We held the G77 and China retreat in June, 2017, where we managed to agree on our position for Phase II implementation of the Nairobi Maafikiano “The revitalization of the Intergovernmental Machinery” and featured notable speakers and experts who have been working in the development field for decades. During the retreat we also agreed to establish a Taskforce of Ambassadors to prepare the group strategic direction. The Taskforce namely “Friends of the Chair” met in November, 2017 and I am confident that they will accomplish the work and provide a good proposal for our group.

12. I would like to emphasise that any success of the Tanzania Chairmanship was because of the strong support and solidarity of the Group. If we, as a Group, are to be successful we need to maintain and promote our "unity in diversity" in pursuing vigorously our common interests. The greatest strength and bargaining power of the Group of 77 and China lies in our ability to maintain and negotiate as a united front. As an outgoing Chair I would like to urge the group to remain united and strong. We should not let issues within the group divide or break us. **WE MUST ALWAYS PRESENT A UNITED FRONT.**

### **Excellencies,**

13. At this juncture, I wish to thank all those that supported Tanzania Chairmanship and I would like to begin by acknowledging all the

members of the Group of 77 and China. I also wish to thank wholeheartedly the South Centre for their tirelessly support and being an important partner of our Group. Aside from South Centre, let me also thank UNITAR for their support in co-organizing the group retreat in June, 2017.

14. Lastly, I thank all the UNCTAD experts particularly the regional coordinators from the Group of 77 and China for their hard work, dedication, and commitment.

15. In closing, I wish to assure H.E Farukh Amil, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan my delegation's strong support throughout his chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China. He has a challenging task ahead, but if we show him the same support that you all provided to Tanzania in the past year, I have no doubt that his Chairmanship will be a resounding success.

**I THANK YOU.**