

**ADDRESS BY H.E. MR. BALDWIN SPENCER, PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA, ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, DELIVERED BY H.E. DR. JOHN W. ASHE, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE HIGH LEVEL MEETING ON THE ITEM: "AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT NEEDS: STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF VARIOUS COMMITMENTS, CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD" (New York, 22 September 2008)**

Honourable Heads of State and Government,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Secretary General of the United Nations,  
Distinguished President of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly.  
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to be able to deliver this address of the Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, on this auspicious occasion.

1- I have the honour and privilege to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We attach great importance to this high level meeting on the theme "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward."

2- The development needs and the challenges confronting the African continent are well known, deep-seated and fundamental. The international community has focused on these needs and challenges in a number of international conferences and summits including the Millennium Development Conference, the Financing for Development Conference, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the 2005 World Summit. There have also been a number of plurilateral and bilateral initiatives directed to Africa; Africa itself has undertaken many initiatives to further its development. We have recognized that addressing Africa's development needs and challenges requires internal action and very significant international cooperation and facilitation in the form of resources, technology and a supporting international environment. We have committed ourselves in declarations, resolutions and plan of action to stand with Africa in the struggle to meet these needs and overcome the challenges.

3- The Secretary General's comprehensive report submitted for this high level meeting and the recommendations of his MDG Africa Steering Group have made one thing abundantly clear: if fully implemented, existing international commitments could take African countries closer to achieving the MDGs and lay the foundation for robust economic growth in Africa. The focus, indeed the mantra, of this high level meeting must therefore be implementation. How do we implement our commitments to Africa?

Mr. President,

4- African countries have done a great deal to change the image of the continent, to mobilize domestic resources, to attract private capital and to enhance accountability and democratic governance. Some African countries have raised domestic revenue as a share of GDP by 6.9 percent between 1996 and 2006, according to the IMF statistics. They have committed to minimum public expenditure targets in key sectors including agriculture. They have shown tremendous leadership in recent years and are putting in place ambitious programmes and strategies to develop and involve their private sector.

5- The obvious question to us is "has the international community delivered on its commitment?"

- Have we provided the committed or promised:

- increase in ODA to Africa? - The Gleneagles promise alone was to increase ODA to Africa by US 25 billion per year by 2010.
- debt relief for all African countries which carry a heavy debt burden?
- international trade environment which allows a level playing field for African agricultural exports such as cotton?

- Have we adjusted the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) regime to allow the required favorable access to vital technologies as has been done for critical pharmaceuticals for HIV/AIDS?

- Have we been mitigating the buildup of greenhouse gasses thereby reducing the climate change related challenges such as droughts and floods or assisting the adaptation effort by African countries especially in agriculture?

- Have we reengineered and streamlined our processes for aid delivery to make them; more supportive of institution building and capacity development in Africa, more effective and less costly and less demanding on the scarce policy, technical and administrative resources of African States?

- Have we increased the flexibility and predictability of our assistance so as to encourage and facilitate longer term planning by African States; and critically

- Have we moved in our assistance and support policy and practice away from the proverbial periodic provision of a fish to Africa to aid Africa's relearning of how to fish in the large African Pond?

Mr. President,

If the answer to all or most of these questions is in the negative, and the Group of 77 and China suspects that this will be the case, then the nature of the

conclusions and determination of this high level meetings and in fact our declaration, will be clear.

The Group of 77 and China's analysis of our declaration and the process leading to it suggests that we have not yet fully grasped the need for urgency, certainty and comprehensiveness in our response to Africa's development needs. We would hope that by the 65th Session of the General Assembly there will be a strong mechanism in place to monitor our commitments so that we can assist Africa in, advancing its development and achieve the MDG's by 2015.

Thank you.