

**SPEECH BY THE HEAD OF THE CUBAN DELEGATION, MINISTER OF
GOVERNMENT RICARDO CABRISAS RUIZ, FOR THE 12TH UNITED
NATIONS MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT**

On behalf of Cuba, I would like to thank the sister nation and government of Ghana for hosting this important conference and for the warm hospitality with which they have welcomed us.

Mr. Chair, esteemed heads of delegations and invitees:

The creation of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was a historical event. In the course of 44 years, this institution has made considerable contributions. It unmasked the inequalities inherent to the world economy and the responsibility of developed countries in this connection. It has also advanced an alternative economic doctrine which is divorced from neo-liberal policies.

Since the early 1980s to date, the UNCTAD has been one of the main targets of a majority of industrialized nations, who have devoted concerted efforts to deprive it of its historical mandate and to gradually undermine its significance. In recent decades, developed countries have in fact managed to weaken the institution.

The prevailing consensus among international institutions cannot make the UNCTAD adapt itself to the process of neo-liberal globalization or the recipes imposed upon it by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the World Trade Organization, institutions which lack transparency and where there is no effective participation by developing countries.

Developed countries seek to impose the model for alleged "good governance" upon this Conference, drawn up by the World Bank, an institution which was recently on the spotlight for the corruption scandal involving its now former Chair.

They also bring pressures to bear on the UNCTAD to have it focus even more on the domestic policies of developing countries, but they refuse to make any reference to the speculative and unregulated financial practices, corporate corruption and bank crises that undermine world stability and growth.

The UNCTAD's objectives and functions retain their validity. Inequalities not only persist but have also grown in magnitude.

- Official Aid for Development from developed countries was decreased by 8.4 % last year. Only 5 of 22 countries honour their commitment to destine 0.7 % of their GDP to such ends. The world's most economically powerful nation, the United States, makes one of the smallest contributions, only 0.16 % of its GDP.

- Between 2002 and 2006, the prices of some basic products went up. The prices of agricultural raw materials grew by 78 %, those of metals and minerals by 265 % and those of oil by 157.6 %. Not all prices, however, have gone up: coffee and sugar prices have remained low and cotton, produced by many of African and Least Developed Countries, went down by 27 %.
- Exports by developed countries doubled between 1998 and 2006. In comparison, international trade transactions by nearly 3/4 of the world's population went up from 29 % in 1996 to a mere 37 % in 2006. This growth has not been equal across all developing countries.
- Poor food-exporting countries lose over 40 billion dollars a year as a result of agricultural subsidies implemented by industrialized countries, subsidies that, according to the WTO, exceed the sum of 350 billion dollars a year.

In addition to this, Mr. Chair, the Doha Round negotiations have reached a critical point at the **World Trade Organization**, owing to the uncertainty and the lack of concrete results that surround issues of development.

Developed countries attempt to impose their free-trade ideology upon the negotiations and, while insisting that underdeveloped countries completely open their markets, apply protectionist measures when products from these countries achieve a certain degree of competitiveness.

Outside of the WTO, developed countries defend a trade agenda which seeks to set down stricter norms that have not been agreed upon on a multilateral basis, curtail South-South integration and limit the space that States have to implement domestic policies.

Growth and development are not the spontaneous outcome of market liberalization. Liberalization does not reduce the gap between rich and poor but rather leads to the opposite, as international studies, even conducted by the World Bank, have shown. The exceptions don't make the rule.

National development policies must be complemented by a favorable international environment, by international cooperation that is not subject to conditions and by an international monetary, financial and trade system that is transparent, open, equitable and based on rules, a system that is predictable, non-discriminatory and geared towards development.

Mr. Chair:

The UNCTAD must raise the world's awareness to work towards a fairer and more equitable world economic order.

The UNCTAD cannot become a technical cooperation agency where underdeveloped countries are trained to comply with the rules set down by the

rich. Revitalizing and reanimating the UNCTAD cannot mean changing or further reducing the scope of its mandate.

This Conference must contribute to the tackling of new global challenges. In the case of climate change, it must promote energy efficiency and saving programs and the use of sustainable and alternative energy sources that aim at the needed balance between food security, bio-energy production and the sustainable use of natural resources.

Neo-liberal globalization has not proven to be an effective means of securing our right to development. Many are the countries that continue to be excluded from global growth.

The training of human resources, construction of infrastructures, extension of productive capacities and the globalization of social justice, cooperation and solidarity are also needed for development.

The Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA), a new initiative aimed at South-South integration in Latin America and the Caribbean, on the basis of these premises, is helping its member countries reach their development goals.

With respect to Cuba, it continues down the path of development, in spite of the nearly half-a-century-old brutal and immoral economic, commercial and financial blockade that the United States has imposed upon it, in violation of the principles of the Multilateral Trade System and international law, deaf to the nearly unanimous position of the international community, which has condemned this policy at the United Nations 16 consecutive times.

I cannot conclude this address today without assuring you that Cuba will support the work of the UNCTAD, in the hopes that it can result in concrete benefits for African countries that suffer the consequences of centuries of slavery, colonization, dependence and economic underdevelopment.

As regards Cuba, I would like to offer some data on our cooperation with Africa:

- Relations are held with 53 countries.
- Collaborators amount to 2638 in 32 countries.
- Cooperation projects carried out by Cuba in Africa total 214 in 17 economic and social sectors.
- Training of human resources in Cuba, mainly in higher education (doctors), is provided to 1841 students.
- Training of human resources in Africa (studying medicine alone) is given to 699 students in medical schools founded in 6 African countries.
- Under the so-called "Operation Miracle" Program, 5021 eye surgical interventions have been carried out in the Mali ophthalmologic center, out of a total of 1 million 43 thousand 807 operations performed in 33 developing countries.

Results of the medical cooperation since 1999, in the context of the Comprehensive Healthcare Program currently underway in 22 African countries:

- 1260 health collaborators have been provided.
- 40 million 100 thousand medical consultations have been made.
- 5 million 800 thousand calls have been made to the patients' homes.
- 594 thousand 553 babies have been delivered.
- 1 million 500 thousand surgical operations have been performed.
- 5 million 300 thousand vaccines have been inoculated.
- 751 thousands 291 lives have been saved.

Cuba, a developing country, remains committed to continue to support the brotherly African people by providing its best resources –the human resources— in their struggle to overcome the adverse situations in which they find themselves in.

Thank you very much.

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