



**Group of 77**  
**Chairmanship Handover Ceremony**  
**Statement by**  
**Honourable Moses Versammy Nagamootoo**  
**Prime Minister of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana**  
**15 January 2020**

Your Excellency Mr. Riad Al-Malki, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the State of Palestine;

Your Excellency Mr. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, President of the 74<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly;

Your Excellency Mr. António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations;

Mr. Mourad Ahmia, Executive Secretary of the Group of 77

Excellencies, Esteemed Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I bring you greetings and best wishes for 2020 from His Excellency President David Arthur Granger and the people of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana in whose name I accept, with a great sense of gratitude and responsibility, the honour bestowed upon our country to serve as Chair of the Group of 77 and China for the year 2020.

In doing so, I wish to pay tribute to the historic and heartening work of the State of Palestine as Chair in 2019. Guyana has been deeply impressed by the dedication and commitment to service demonstrated by Palestine in discharging its responsibilities, even in the midst of greatly challenging national circumstances. The Group is indebted for the sterling work and high bar and example of service of the Palestinian delegation. For this, I invite you to give a round of applause. I request, Excellency Minister Al-Malki, that you convey our kind regards to His Excellency Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine. We also take the opportunity to express gratitude to Mr. Mourad Ahmia, Executive Secretary of the Group of 77, and his team, for their arduous and consistently outstanding work.

Excellencies,

As we meet today, the international situation gives increasing cause for concern. Notwithstanding the Paris Agreement and SDGs, many developing countries continue to grapple with a plethora of grave challenges, with respect to the ravages caused by climate change, poverty, hunger and disease. There is a deepening trust deficit in multilateralism as well as inadequate means of implementation, including financing, trade, technology transfer and capacity building.

On the other hand, 2020 is already full of significant undertakings and challenges that will sternly test the mettle of our Group. It must be readily evident, therefore, that nothing short of a strong, credible and focused G-77 will enable us to be equal to the demands of our time. For this reason, it is to these core imperatives of working for a strong, credible and focused G-77, to which our energies as Chair will be dedicated. In a word, during 2020 we will seek to enhance the image and character of our Group as the largest negotiating bloc within the United Nations.

Excellencies,

The G-77 is strong as it is united. The G-77 is strong acting in solidarity. As a large Group our circumstances, realities and experiences vary greatly but we will use our diversity as a source of strength. The world needs a strong United Nations and a strong G-77.

The G-77 derives its credibility from operating on a principled basis. The G77 is credible through consistent and coherent action, whether in defence of our core foundational principles or in the pursuit of the implementation of concrete programmes and initiatives. We must work to ensure that our credibility is never open to question.

Our Group is focused when we have clear and common objectives. The G-77 is focused when we demonstrate leadership on issues of global importance. While our working methods and approaches have served us well, we must continue to review, renew and revitalize our modalities of work to ensure that we are optimized to pursue the best interests and undertakings mandated by the Group.

## Excellencies

As the UN observes, this year, the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its founding, it is opportune for the G-77 to take account of its own progress and contribution to the achievements of this global organization with respect to development, through the convening of the South Summit, the supreme decision-making forum of our Group.

Guyana congratulates Uganda for its initiative to host the Third South Summit for which preparatory work is now well underway to ensure its success. Following the Havana Summit in 2000 and the Doha Summit in 2005, the Summit this year will provide a welcome opportunity to review progress of the G-77 and to strategize on concrete actions to consolidate and reinvigorate the platform of the South, including taking account of the current global context and developments, as well as building on the outcome of the Second United Nations High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation held in Buenos Aires last year. We encourage all members to participate in the South Summit at the highest possible level.

In 2020 we must also pursue definitive action to ensure that efforts are accelerated to implement the Paris Agreement and to achieve the transformative 2030 Agenda, including the SDGs. The rationale and urgency for such scaled-up efforts are abundantly clear to us all.

## Excellencies

Permit me to share the pride of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana in assuming the Chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China, in the year that we celebrate our Golden Jubilee as a Republic. It is also the year in which we launch the 2020-2029 Decade of Development within the context of our national development plan – the Green State Development Strategy: Vision 2040.

While a small country, Guyana has been consistently determined to strengthen democratic norms and to realize higher levels of prosperity, cohesion and progress for all its citizens. At the international level these convictions have been mirrored by our strong subscription to such fundamental principles as the sovereign equality of states, the peaceful resolution of disputes, the international rule of law and the power of multilateralism and the

meaningful contribution of all states – small or large, rich or poor. Our embrace of these principles has inspired our activism at the international level and membership of such regional and international organizations as CARICOM, CELAC, AOSIS, the Commonwealth, the OIC, Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations. It was this conviction that informed our strident support for the dismantling of Apartheid, principled support for the Palestinian cause based on a two-state solution, opposition to the embargo on Cuba, unilateral coercive measures, social injustice to the violation of the rights and fundamental freedoms of anyone.

Our commitment to sustainable development is of long standing and remains undiminished, even in the face of our status as the newest oil-producing state. As a high forest cover, low deforestation country and net carbon sink, Guyana – with 87% of its land area covered by forests, has acted to limit the deforestation of our pristine tropical Amazon forests to world leading levels. Indeed, Guyana has been consistently identified as one of the prime eco-tourism destinations in the world.

Since its founding as an independent state, Guyana has striven to maintain an independent foreign policy of peace and friendship with all countries based on mutual interests, shared perspectives and cooperation for common cause.

Accordingly, we anticipate engaging all countries, developed and developing, in a spirit of partnership to advance the interests of the Group and of global priorities, especially with respect to climate, trade, reform of the UN development system, the financial situation of the UN, strengthening multilateralism, the particular circumstances of all developing countries including SIDS, LDCs, LLDCs, Africa and middle-income countries, and advancing more effective measures of development.

To this end, we anticipate the inclusion in the 2020 Programme of Work of the Group, to be considered at the Organizational Meeting on Friday, a number of thematic and regional meetings that will contribute to the achievement of our objectives in these areas.

Excellencies

We are grateful that you have bestowed the honour and privilege for Guyana to serve as Chair of the Group of 77 and China for the second time. I assure you we will spare no effort in ensuring that we build upon the past achievements of the Group.

With great humility, we commit to remain attentive to the perspectives of all members and to discharge the responsibilities of Chair with full integrity, commitment to our core principles and in furtherance of the interests of all developing countries.

We invite the active involvement of all members in the work of the Group this year and with a view to realizing the high ideals of the G-77 and China for the peoples of all our countries and for the peoples of the world.

I thank you.