



GROUP OF FIFTEEN
The Summit Level Group of Developing Countries

G-15/03/PR80/2

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EIGHTIETH MEETING
OF THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE GROUP OF FIFTEEN
Geneva, 24 October and 27 November 2003

SUMMARY RECORDS

1. The 80th Meeting of the Personal Representatives (PRs) of the Heads of State and Government of the Group of Fifteen was held on 24 October and resumed on 27 November 2003 in Geneva, under the Chairmanship of Ambassador Blancanieve Portocarrero, the Personal Representative of the President of Venezuela.

2. The Chairperson welcomed the PRs to the meeting and expressed the hope that significant progress will be made in the substantive preparations for the XII Summit to be held in February 2004 in Puerto Ordaz, Venezuela, in spite of the prevailing time constraints. To this end, she called for the support and cooperation of all PRs.

Item 1 – Adoption of the Agenda

3. The meeting adopted its Provisional Agenda, without amendment, as contained in Document G-15/03/PR80/1.

Item 2 - Substantive preparations for the XII Summit: Consideration of the Revised Draft Joint Communiqué of the XII Summit.

4. At the first session of the 80th Meeting of the PRs held on 24 October 2003, the Chairperson remarked that the Revised Draft Joint Communiqué (DJC) of the XII Summit (Document G-15/03/DJC/Rev.12), to be considered at the Meeting, had taken into account new developments and forthcoming events of significance to the Group. She noted that the document built upon DJC Revision 11 of October 2002 that was agreed to before the initial cancellation of the XII Summit and as a result, represented a rolling text, meant to serve as a basis for further work. She further noted that although the draft document contained consensus language, additional efforts should be made to make it more concise, focused as well as to make the desired political impact. She invited PRs to undertake a general exchange of views on the document with a view to giving clear guidelines to G-15 Experts to undertake substantive drafting work on the document, for submission to the next session of the 80th PRs meeting.

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5. In their interventions, PRs welcomed the revised DJC and made the following comments and suggestions to guide the Experts in their pending task:

- That the DJC should be revised taking into account the necessity to use appropriate political language befitting a Summit document;
- It should be borne in mind that some of the key issues addressed in the DJC (e.g. the WTO, WSIS, UNCTAD XI, etc.) are still evolving and as a result, should be revisited in due course;
- That the formulation on the World Summit on the Information Society should include the need for a development-oriented and people-centered strategy, in light of the current difficulties in the WSIS Prep-Com;
- That the disproportionate attention given to the WTO should be scaled down and that the comment on the outcome of the 5th WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancun should not be apologetic, particularly as developing countries demonstrated unity and solidarity in defence of their interests in the multilateral trade talks. That reference to the General Council of the WTO should be deleted;
- It was recommended to have a separate and strengthened paragraph on UNCTAD XI, which should include a reference to its facilitation of South-South cooperation and the GSTP. The Group should reaffirm its active participation in the process with a view to making the Conference successful. Brazil was requested to propose a paragraph in this regard;
- That NEPAD and the issue of illegal capital flight should be mentioned;
- That greater emphasis should be placed on economic issues and South-South cooperation;
- A view was held that the treatment of the issue of Terrorism, a subject not dealt with in the DJC, was not satisfactory and that the previous formulations on it should have been retained in square brackets in the absence of consensus. Based on the fruitless experience of the past, some members however cautioned that extreme care must be taken to avoid contentious and divisive issues, and that if possible, a very short paragraph on Terrorism that will command consensus could be included. Another view expressed was that if non-economic issues were re-introduced into the DJC, then a mention must be to the issue of small arms and light weapons.

6. In her summary, the Chairperson noted the desire to have a very short, focused and politically powerful DJC that would make the desired political impact on the international scene. She also noted the need to establish an appropriate balance in the treatment of the issues mentioned in the document, particularly the WTO and to avoid being apologetic on the outcome of Cancun. She highlighted the need to include NEPAD in the text. The Chairperson recalled the endless and fruitless time and energy wasted on the subject of Terrorism in the recent past, at the end of which, the most reasonable option was to leave it out of the DJC. She remarked that consideration could be given to a small formulation on Terrorism, if interested parties could come up with one that will command consensus. This, she noted, could be included in the DJC or annexed to it as a separate statement. She stated that with the prevailing time constraint, it was only reasonable to concentrate on issues that command consensus among all members. She suggested that the subject of terrorism, its implication on the security and sovereignty of states, as well as the need to distinguish it from the legitimate right to self-determination could even be addressed in four lines, within the context of multilateralism as a vehicle for the peaceful settlement of international disputes.

7. At the resumed session of the 80th Meeting of the PRs held on Thursday, 27 November 2003, the Chairperson introduced Revision 13 of the DJC resulting from the work of the Experts. She commended the Experts for presenting a balanced, precise and politically focused draft text. After a brief presentation by the Chairman of the Experts' Group, the Chairperson invited PRs to consider the document with a view to further improving it. In their interventions, the PRs welcomed the new draft document and made the following observations and suggestions:

- A proposed text on Terrorism was introduced and it was agreed that Experts should meet again to consider, among other things, the proposal with a view to coming up with a concise and consensual formulation, in light of the past experience on the subject. A view was expressed to consider limiting the mention of terrorism to its economic consequences;
- Paragraphs 4, 5, 7 and 9 should be further shortened;
- It was agreed to delete paragraph 15 dealing with the evaluation of the reflection process, which was considered an internal matter that could be reflected in the Chairperson's Report to the next Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs; another suggestion was that, instead of retaining any paragraphs on the reflection process in the DJC, new ideas on South-South cooperation as well as a positive and forward looking statement on the useful purpose and future endeavours of the Group could be incorporated into the document.
- That paragraphs with technicalities should be revised taking into account the necessity to use appropriate political language befitting a Summit document.

8. Within the context of the preparations for the XII Summit, the Chairperson briefed the Meeting on the outcome of the series of bilateral discussions she had held with PRs, as a result of instructions from Caracas. She disclosed that PRs undertook to facilitate maximum participation of their Heads of State and Government in the Summit and that formal invitations will be extended as soon as further details were made available to the Government of Venezuela. She informed the Meeting that there was general support for the intention of the Government of Venezuela to introduce four areas of South-South cooperation that should constitute the priority areas for the Group's action, namely;

- Energy and Development
- Information and Communications Technology
- Generic Drugs and Public Health
- Human Resource Training

9. The Chairperson also informed that it was generally recommended in the course of her bilateral consultations with PRs that further efforts should be undertaken to invigorate the Group and to this end, that PRs should request their capitals to consider the introduction of new South-South cooperation projects at the XII Summit. She noted that some PRs however cautioned that efforts should be made avoid duplication. Finally, she mentioned that PRs all agreed on the need to have a short and politically focused DJC on issues that would strengthen the Group. The Chairperson clarified that the Draft Declaration on Energy and Development will be transmitted by the Minister of Energy of Venezuela to his counterparts for further comments and review before its transmission to the Summit since no meeting of Energy Ministers will be held.

Item 3 - Exchange of views on the challenges facing the G-15 and its vision, orientation, objectives and activities

10. The Chairperson recalled that, in the previous discussions on the subject, Personal Representatives had agreed that the assignment on the challenges facing the G-15 and its vision, orientation, objectives and activities was of a long-term nature that could go beyond the XII Summit. With respect to the recommendation by the Foreign Ministers to consider the engagement of an independent consultant to undertake the study, she recalled that some options were suggested at a previous PRs meeting, including the proposal to identify and appoint three eminent personalities, one from each of the regions of the G-15, who were conversant with South-South cooperation and other concerns and challenges faced by developing countries. On the other option to approach the South Centre to undertake the exercise on behalf of the Group, she informed the Meeting that she had held a meeting with the South Centre and that another round of meeting would take place soon. In the meantime and pending further progress on the two options mentioned earlier, the Chairperson invited the PRs to undertake further exchange of views on the challenges facing the G-15 and its vision, orientation, objectives and activities. She noted that the outcome of the exchange of views could be used as a provisional Report to the Foreign Ministers or as Terms of Reference for the external consultants to be engaged.

11. In response, the PRs made the following comments and observations:

- That the option to engage external consultants should be kept open as PRs do not have sufficient time at their disposal to undertake an indepth reflection process;
- That in light of time constraints, the consultants to be engaged could be required to prepare an interim report for submission to the XII Summit and to continue the assignment thereafter. Timely action on this option was requested;
- The need to address the financing of the external consultants should be addressed since there was no budgetary provision for the task; also to be considered in this regard are the Terms of Reference and scope of the task to be assigned to the consultants;
- It was recommended that member countries should look inwards, particularly by demonstrating stronger political commitment in order to revitalize the Group;
- That since the Group could not properly be said to be facing real identity crisis, any new mission envisaged should not undermine or detract from the founding objectives of the Group and previous Summit decisions;
- That members of the G-15 Commission should fully discharge their responsibilities to enable it conclude its work in order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the Group in the attainment of its objectives and the implementation of Summit decisions. A view was therefore expressed that, it should be after the consideration of the Commission's work in this regard that Heads of State and Government could consider the need or otherwise for the Group to engage independent consultants to carry out further work;
- That the G-15 Human Resource Training Programme (HRTP) represented a good example of intra G-15 cooperation that should serve as a model for other cooperative ventures.

12. In her concluding remarks, the Chairperson noted that PRs will continue to explore the feasibility of engaging independent consultants, both on the short and long-term basis, to accomplish the task assigned by the Ministers. She however noted that in the meantime, a

provisional report could be submitted to the Summit, on the basis of the report of the Chairperson to the Foreign Ministers in New York and the recommendations of the latter on the challenges facing the G-15 and its vision, orientation, objectives and activities. The Chairperson noted that while it was important for the Commission to accomplish its assignment, it was obvious that the Commission's work was quite different from the task envisaged in the reflection process.

Item 4 - Other Business

13. The Chairperson formally presented the Budget Variance Report for the 2nd Quarter of 2003, prepared by the official auditors of the Group. It indicated the difference between the Approved 2003 Budget and Actual Expenditures for the period in question, as contained in document **G-15/03/PR80/INF.1**. The Report also contained the status of the Group's investments for the period. The Budget Variance Report and the status of the Group's investments were formally noted by the PRs.

14. In the absence of any other matters to be considered, the meeting was therefore adjourned.
