



GROUP OF FIFTEEN
The Summit Level Group of Developing Countries

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EIGHTY-SECOND MEETING
OF THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE GROUP OF FIFTEEN
Geneva, 16 January 2004

SUMMARY RECORDS

1. The 82nd Meeting of the Personal Representatives (PRs) of the Heads of State and Government of the Group of Fifteen was held on 16 January 2004 in Geneva, under the Chairmanship of Ambassador Blancanieve Portocarrero, the Personal Representative of the President of Venezuela.

2. The Chairperson welcomed the PRs to their first formal meeting in the year 2004, as the Group embarks on the final phase of preparations for the XII Summit, to be held on 27 - 28 February 2004 in Puerto Ordaz, Venezuela. She stated that, since the Summit was fast approaching, substantive preparations for the event would be concluded at the present meeting. To this end, she called for the support and cooperation of all PRs towards ensuring rapid progress on the few matters that were pending. She stated that, at the end of proceedings, she would suspend the 82nd PRs Meeting. Thereafter, PRs will continue to meet in resumed sessions of the latter or in informal settings, as the need may arise, to fine-tune or update preparations for the Summit meeting.

3. The Chairperson was joined by the PRs in welcoming H. E. Mrs. Sarala Fernando, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Switzerland, upon her appointment as the Personal Representative of the President of Sri Lanka to the Group of Fifteen. The Personal Representatives also joined the Chairperson in expressing their sympathies and condolences to the Government and people of the Islamic Republic of Iran over the recent earthquake that devastated the city of Bam. In response, the PR of Iran acknowledged, with appreciation, the kind sentiments and solidarity expressed.

Item 1 – Adoption of the Agenda

4. The meeting adopted its Provisional Agenda, without amendment, as contained in Document G-15/04/PR82/1.

Item 2 - Substantive preparations for the XII Summit:

(a) Briefing on the current status of arrangements for the XII Summit and its preceding meetings;

5. The Chairperson informed the PRs that every effort was being made by the Government of Venezuela to ensure the successful hosting of the XII Summit of Heads of State and Government of the G-15 in the city of Puerto Ordaz, Ciudad Guayana, Bolivar State, Venezuela, on 27-28 February 2004. She recalled that formal invitation letters addressed to Heads of State and Government for their participation in the Summit were recently delivered through the PRs in Geneva. She pointed out that all the activities of the Summit, including the Retreat, would take place at the Hydroelectric Complex C.V.G. Macagua as follows: Opening and Closing Ceremonies will be held in *Orinoco Amphitheatre (VENALUM)*; Working sessions of the Heads of State and Government will be held in *Salón de Sesiones del Club Camatagua*; Meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs will be held in the Meeting Room of Club Macagua; and the meetings of the Personal Representatives will be held in *Ecomuseo del Caroní Museum*.

6. The Chairperson drew the attention of PRs to the first version of a manual entitled, *Guide for Participants* and the *Provisional Programme for the XII Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Group of 15*, which the TSF had circulated recently. She noted that the provisional manual contained very important information on administrative and logistical arrangements for the meetings of the XII Summit, as well as the required information for the smooth participation of delegations in these meetings. She enjoined member countries to give particular attention to the information provided therein, and to expeditiously complete and return the relevant Registration Forms by the general deadline of 6 February 2004, as indicated in the relevant parts of the manual. She remarked that some missing information, such as hotel tariffs, would be furnished in the final edition of the *Guide for Participants*, which will be made available in due course.

7. Speaking further, the Chairperson observed that the Government of Venezuela will provide accommodation and cover the costs of hospitality for the Heads of State/Government and Ministers of Foreign Affairs, including their spouses, as well as Personal Representatives. In addition, she added that, offices would be provided for delegates at the Club Managua, CVG Hydroelectric Complex, with computing, printing and Internet equipment. The Chairperson invited PRs to note that, in addition to the accommodation to be given to Heads of State/Government, Foreign Ministers and PRs, ten (10) additional hotel rooms will be available for reservations to each delegation at the Intercontinental Guayana and Best Western Mara Inn Hotel. It was stressed that room reservations should be made by each delegation directly with the hotels via their website, telephone and fax numbers which were specified in the list of hotels in the manual or through each member country's Diplomatic or Consular Mission accredited to Venezuela. Member countries were advised that reservations should be made sufficiently in advance, and not later than 6 February 2004.

8. The Chairperson referred PRs to the *Guide for Participants* for further clarifications on the foregoing and other aspects, such as transportation, security, accreditation, travel arrangements, telecommunications, etc. Responding to a comment on a possible difficulty arising from the fact that only one flight operates from Caracas to Puerto Ordaz, the Chairperson remarked that the Summit Organizing Committee in the host country would ensure that delegates got to the Summit venue without difficulties. She also stated that the Venezuelan Embassy in Berne would handle visa requests from delegates departing from Geneva.

(b) Consideration of the Revised Draft Joint Communiqué of the XII Summit;

9. The Chairperson recalled that, due to the lingering differences on the issue of Terrorism, an open-ended Working Group at Experts level was established to work on a consensus paragraph on Terrorism. She announced that the Working Group successfully accomplished its assignment and submitted a text that took into account, the concerns of most delegations. She noted that while the text may not be perfect, it represented the minimum basis for an agreement. The Chairperson also reported that the open-ended Working Group of PRs, established to work on a possible consensus language on the subject of agricultural export subsidies in paragraph 4 of the DJC, had agreed to a consensus text, based on the Doha mandate. She drew attention of the meeting to Nigeria's proposed text on HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. The Chairperson also introduced Venezuela's proposed amendment to Paragraph 11 of the DJC. She said that this was informed by the intention of the Government of Venezuela to propose, at the Summit, four main priority areas for South-South Cooperation and the elaboration of a Plan of Action. She added that the need for the proposed amendment was also underlined by the positive outcome of the bilateral consultations held with PRs on the four priority areas of Energy and Development, ICTs, Generic Drugs and Public Health as well as Human Resource Training Programme.

11. The consideration of the proposed text on Terrorism revealed the same differences and perceptions that had made agreement impossible on the subject in the previous drawn out exercise last year. A delegation expressed serious difficulties with what it termed the ambiguous attempt to condemn all forms of terrorism, while at the same time asserting that combating terrorism should be undertaken without prejudice to the legitimate struggle of peoples under colonial or alien domination. The delegation reasoned that, if this precept was accepted, it stood the risk of leaving the door open to some forms of terrorism, and therefore, unacceptable. Some PRs who also had concerns on the uncomfortable linkage between terrorism and the right to self-determination disclosed that a number of PRs, not present at the meeting, had also confided in them on this difficulty. On the other hand, a good number of PRs expressed their willingness to accept the proposed text, which, while not fully accommodating their preferred choice as reflected in the earlier proposed text by Malaysia, represented an acceptable minimum basis for agreement in the spirit of compromise.

12. In light of the persisting differences that were apparently irreconcilable, the following comments and observations were made:

- Further precious time should not be wasted on the subject, and that as a result, the meeting should abide by the earlier ruling that if consensus could not be reached on a text on terrorism, then there would be no paragraph on the subject in the DJC;
- That in line with the Group's philosophy, only issues that enjoy consensus and promote common perception and unity among member countries should merit the Group's consideration; therefore that it was absolutely important for PRs to act with utmost caution and sense of responsibility by dispensing with the issue that has become evidently contentious and divisive;
- The delegation of Kenya requested that the proposed text be referred to the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers for consideration, the view was widely held that it would be unrealistic and contrary to the Group's procedure of working by consensus to take this line of action. It was however acknowledged that Foreign Ministers and Heads of

State/Government were at liberty to re-introduce the subject or any other matter for consideration and decision at their impending meetings.

13. In summing up the discussions, the Chairperson regretted the inability to forge a consensus on the proposed compromise text on terrorism and ruled that the subject would not be included in the XII Summit DJC. Based on the popular view at the meeting and the rule of consensus, she also remarked that the proposed text would not be forwarded to the Foreign Ministers. The foregoing notwithstanding, she re-asserted the prerogative of the Foreign Ministers and the Heads of State/Government to raise and consider any subject, including terrorism, at their meetings. She however advised PRs to convey the strong sentiments expressed on the subject of terrorism to their respective capital.

14. The meeting welcomed the consensus text presented by the open-ended Working Group of PRs on the subject of agricultural export subsidies in paragraph 4 of the DJC, which was based on the Doha mandate. A delegation that had expressed concern on the omission of reference to the needs of the Net Food Importing Developing Countries however agreed to accept the text, with a the introduction of a slight amendment which was eventually conceded. Furthermore, Nigeria's proposed text on HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases was well received. With the broadening of its scope and slight amendments, the proposed text was eventually adopted. The Venezuelan proposed amendment to Paragraph 11 of the DJC posed some difficulties to several member countries for a number of reasons, including the impropriety and impracticality of the idea of instructing Foreign Ministers to elaborate a Plan of Action as well as the danger of further complicating the work of the Group's existing mechanisms. It was strongly felt that such activity fell within the responsibilities assigned to the G-15 Commission, which sadly, had performed bellow expectation.

15. Venezuela clarified that the reasoning behind the proposed amendment was to give further political impetus and the desired focus to the main areas of South-South cooperation. In the end, the Venezuelan proposal was drastically amended and incorporated into the DJC, without the aspects that had caused concerns. As a result of the critical comments made on the performance of G-15 mechanisms and the spirit of the ongoing reflection on the vision and mission of the G-15, it was agreed that a meeting of the PRs should be convened to re-evaluate the performance of the Commission and the role of the Committee on Investment, Trade and Technology (CITT) as well as the current status of the implementation of G-15 collaborative projects. The outcome of the exercise would be reflected in the report to the Foreign Ministers. To this end, the TSF was requested to provide the relevant reports on both subjects. Referring to the mention in the DJC of the G-15 Task Force on ICT, Malaysia reminded the meeting that Chairmanship of the body, in line with the principle of rotation, will be transferred to the next Chairman of the Group.

16. The Meeting concluded the consideration of the DJC by reviewing the entire document before endorsing it, unanimously, as amended, for onward transmission to the 25th Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs to be held in Venezuela.

(c) Consideration of the Draft Indicative Provisional Agenda of the Plenary Session of the XII Summit of Heads of State and Government.

17. The Chairperson remarked that, as a result of a request received from Caracas, the Draft Indicative Provisional Agenda of the Plenary Session of the XII Summit of Heads of State and Government, endorsed at the 81st Meeting of the PRs in December 2003, has been slightly adjusted. She noted that the adjustment entailed the restructuring of the consideration of Item 3 of the said Provisional Agenda (Exchange of views on the current international situation, including Energy and Development) into two segments in order to enable the Heads of State and Government accord special attention to Energy and Development, the theme of the XII Summit. She remarked that therefore, Item 3 of the Draft Indicative Provisional Agenda of the Plenary Session of the XII Summit will be considered in two segments, as contained in Annex 2 of document **G-15/03/L.4/Rev.2**, as follows: (a) Reflection on the current international situation; and (b) Deliberation on Energy and Development. Responding, several delegations expressed concern on the fact that the proposed adjustment would entail that each Head of State/Government would be required to make two separate statements at the plenary. Some delegations also wondered if there would be sufficient time available for this purpose. While some PRs showed flexibility on the change, the predominant view was that Heads of State/Government should be spared this additional burden.

Item 3 - Other Business

18. Some delegations sought clarification on the process of handling the Draft Puerto Ordaz Declaration on Energy and Development, in the absence of a Meeting of G-15 Energy Ministers. Several PRs disclosed that, contrary to earlier assurances from the Chairperson, their Ministers of Energy had not been consulted on the draft Declaration. Responding, the Chairperson further assured the meeting that Caracas would be contacted on the matter with a view to ensuring that all G-15 Ministers of Energy were involved in the evolution of the final text. She stated that the views of all Ministers of Energy would be reflected in the draft document before its submission to the Heads of State/Government for consideration and adoption at the Summit.

19. In the absence of any other matter to be considered, the meeting was suspended, and will be resumed as necessary.
