



**GROUP OF FIFTEEN**  
**The Summit Level Group of Developing Countries**

Date issued: 14 May 2010  
**G-15/10/FM32/3**

Distribution: GENERAL

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Item 3 of the Provisional Agenda

**THIRTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
**OF THE GROUP OF FIFTEEN**  
15 May 2010, Tehran

**Status Report of the Chairman of the 97<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Personal Representatives of the Group of Fifteen**

Honourable Ministers will recall that at the 31<sup>st</sup> Meeting of Foreign Ministers held in New York in September 2009, I had presented a report on the preoccupations of the Personal Representatives of Heads of State and Government of the Group of Fifteen (PRs) in their meetings as well as other activities of the Group beginning from the assumption of the Chairmanship of the Group by the Islamic Republic of Iran at the conclusion of the 13<sup>th</sup> Summit in 2006 in Havana up to the 96<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Personal Representatives held on 18 September 2009 in Geneva. Today I wish to present the highlights of my previous report and a summary of the additional actions undertaken by Personal Representatives pursuant to some of the decisions taken at the last Meeting of the Foreign Ministers as well as the outcomes of the 97<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Personal Representatives that was concluded on 14 May 2010 in Tehran, preparatory to the 14<sup>th</sup> Summit.

**I. Organization of a High Level Meeting on Water Resources Management and Rural and Agricultural Development**

During the last Foreign Ministers Meeting, I had reported that in furtherance of the mandate given by the Havana Summit of 2006, a high level Meeting on “*Water Resources Management and Rural and Agricultural Development*” was held in Tehran in September 2007. Participants, who were present from the majority of G-15 countries, made a number of recommendations on capacity building and networking; the establishment of a Water Council and Water Fund; Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM); and Agriculture and Rural Development best practices. The main benefit of the Meeting was that it provided a forum for sharing experiences on water resources management and rural and agricultural development that could facilitate the implementation of good practices in these critical economic sectors within G-15 member countries. Ministers had taken note of the outcomes of the High Level meeting, an important activity in the programmes and priorities outlined by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran as a run up to the 14<sup>th</sup> Summit.

## **II. G-15 Working Groups on Water Resources Management and Agriculture and Rural Development**

Ministers will recall that, based on the suggestions made in the High Level Meeting on Water Resources Management and Agriculture and Rural Development, Foreign Ministers, in their 30<sup>th</sup> Meeting, had approved modalities for activating G-15 Working Groups on Water Resources Management and Agriculture and Rural Development, after making needed modifications regarding the scope and focus of the Working Groups. In this regard, I had reported that the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has reiterated its commitment to the initiative and undertook to conduct an internal review and to later put forward suggestions as to how the Working Groups could be activated by Member States. Ministers had taken due note of this in their previous Meeting.

## **III. The proposed G-15 project on Renewable Energies**

I had also previously reported to the Foreign Ministers the efforts undertaken by the Islamic Republic of Iran to initiate new G-15 collaborative projects. To this end, the Islamic Republic of Iran had circulated to member countries a preliminary project proposal on a Cooperation Framework amongst G-15 Countries for the Development of Renewable Energies. Ministers, in their previous Meeting, had taken note of the reiteration by the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran of its commitment on the proposed project and its intention to conduct an internal review of the situation and to later put forward suggestions as to how member countries could proceed with the proposed G-15 project on renewable energies.

## **IV. The G-15 Africa Cooperation Fund**

I had also reported to Your Excellencies the lack of progress on an issue pending with the Group for a long time - that of approving the modalities for establishing a development fund for Africa. Personal Representatives had requested Ministers for more time and, to this end, Ministers had urged Personal Representatives to continue their consultations in Geneva with a view to resolving the differences between member countries on the proposed G-15 Africa Cooperation Fund. In the absence of progress on the subject, Ministers again, at their meeting last year renewed the mandate of the Personal Representatives to continue their consultations.

## **V. Streamlining the criteria for G-15 project selection and implementation:**

My report to the last Foreign Ministers' Meeting also mentioned that the 29<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Foreign Ministers held in September 2007 had considered the performance of G-15 Projects and called for a reflection on further measures to make projects more successful, and how Personal Representatives subsequently carried out an extensive exercise to revamp the guidelines for selecting and implementing projects. Ministers had noted that the new guidelines, which were accepted, with modifications, at the 30<sup>th</sup> Foreign Ministers Meeting in September 2008 emphasize, among other things, the importance of a feasibility study to justify the project's viability as well as the primary responsibility of the participating countries for ensuring the successful and expeditious implementation and follow-up of approved projects.

## **VI. Withdrawal of Colombia and Peru from the membership of the Group.**

In my previous report to Foreign Ministers, I had briefed Ministers on the withdrawal of Peru in December 2008 from the membership of the Group. Foreign Ministers had mandated the Personal Representatives of the Troika Countries to contact the Peruvian Government and to raise the issue of how the country intends to settle its outstanding contributions to the Group. PRs were also mandated to send a reminder to the government of Colombia with regard to the settlement of its arrears to the Group, following its withdrawal in 2006. Accordingly, letters addressed to the Foreign Ministers of Peru and Colombia, were sent by the Troika PRs in December 2009, enquiring of the countries' positions with respect to the settlement of their arrears, amounting to US\$ 267,911 and US \$350,000 respectively. Foreign Ministers are invited to note the action taken, for which the Group is yet to receive a reply from the governments of Colombia or Peru.

## **VII. Composition of the Troika Board of Supervisors**

Your Excellencies will recall that, with Sri Lanka's offer to assume the Chairmanship of the Group, Ministers agreed last year that member countries from the Latin American and the Caribbean region should hold informal consultations with a view to designating a country to represent them on the Troika Board of Supervisors. This was to be in addition to the traditional composition of the Troika, on the understanding that the choice of a country made does not carry with it any obligation to host a Summit. Ministers from the said region may wish to hold informal consultations among themselves in the course of this meeting to designate a representative for the Troika Board of Supervisors, or decide to delegate the assignment to their PRs in Geneva, under the coordination of a member country chosen by them.

## **VIII. Establishment of a High Level Task Force to Evaluate the Progress and Prospects of the Group.**

Your Excellencies will recall that I reported to your last meeting in New York that Personal Representatives reflected on the fact that the year 2009 marked the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Group. They therefore considered it opportune to reflect on the progress made so far by the Group, and observed that while some progress had been recorded, the Group had nonetheless experienced some difficulties. Personal Representatives therefore proposed, and Foreign Ministers approved to recommend that the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, as the incoming Chairman of the Group, be invited to establish a high-level Task Force consisting of Senior Officials/Personal Representatives. To this end, Ministers agreed that the Task Force should assess past achievements and challenges including the reasons for the recent withdrawal of some member countries, why projects have not been successful and why the private sectors of member countries have not been active in the activities of the Group. In our recent deliberations, PRs further elaborated that the Task Force should undertake a thorough and fair assessment on the progress, financial situation and prospects of the Group and to provide action-oriented recommendations on its revitalization, to be reported to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs at their Meeting on the margins of the forthcoming 65<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly. It was agreed that in carrying out its tasks, the High Level Task Force could commission an independent assessment of the Group to an outside institution. I invite Your Excellencies to note that an appropriate paragraph to this effect had been inserted in the Draft Joint Communiqué of the 14<sup>th</sup> Summit.

## **IX. G-15 Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Services (FCCIS)**

My previous report had also mentioned the activities of the G-15 Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Services (FCCIS), which held its 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in New Delhi from 18-24 October 2008 under the theme “World Commodity Prices Development and the need to enhance cooperation in Trade and Investment within the G-15 countries.” I had also reported that in the interest of greater business-to-business contacts between member countries, PRs had recommended and Foreign Ministers had approved at their 2008 Meeting, a request by the FCCIS that it be allowed to convene its meeting on the flanks of future G-15 Summits. In this regard, the Director General of the FCCIS briefed PRs on the outcome of their General Body Meeting of the FCCIS hosted by the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries and Mines held in Tehran alongside the Summit, under the theme: “*The Current Financial and Economic Crisis*”. Some of the recommendations submitted for consideration by the private sector body of the G-15 included the necessity to revive the meetings of

G-15 Ministers of Trade and Economy, which used to facilitate better interaction between the private sector players of G-15 countries; the need for G-15 governments to provide their business communities with financial resources, with special attention to SMEs; simplification of business visas to facilitate greater movement of business persons among G-15 countries. The full report submitted by the FCCIS was received and noted by the Personal Representatives. I therefore invite Your Excellencies to take note of these encouraging activities and useful recommendations of the FCCIS, the independent private sector body of the G-15.

## **X. Preparations for the 14<sup>th</sup> Summit**

I now turn to some of the activities undertaken by PRs in preparation for this Summit. Ministers are aware that the search for a host for the 15<sup>th</sup> Summit somewhat delayed the organization of the 14<sup>th</sup> Summit. However, following the welcome decision of the Government of Sri Lanka to assume the next Chairmanship of the Group, and the finalization of the date and venue for the present Summits by the Islamic Republic of Iran, Personal Representatives undertook the necessary preparatory arrangements for the smooth organization of the Summit. These include administrative and logistic arrangements for the participation of their respective Heads of State and Government as well as Foreign Ministers and the finalization of the documentation for the Summit.

With respect to documentation for the Summit, PRs reviewed and revised the Provisional Agenda of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Indicative Provisional Agenda for the 14<sup>th</sup> Summit as well as the updated Draft Joint Communiqué of the Summit. With respect to the Draft Joint Communiqué for the Summit, it will be recalled that the Draft Joint Communiqué was considered and endorsed by Foreign Ministers at their last meeting held in New York in September 2009 and enjoyed a large measure of consensus, except for one paragraph relating to the Palestinian situation on which despite considerable deliberations, consensus could not be reached. In the run-up to this Summit, and following thorough and lengthy discussions at the expert level, PRs reviewed the Draft Joint Communiqué with a view to updating it as well as to make additional efforts to reach consensus on the outstanding paragraph from New York. In the process, new suggestions for amendments were submitted by member states for consideration. In view of the foregoing, PRs updated the Draft Joint Communiqué in the light of various events that have taken place on the world stage since the last meeting of the Foreign Ministers, such as the Seventh WTO Ministerial Conference that took place in November-December 2009, the Copenhagen Climate Conference held in December 2009

as well as the relative reduction in the threats posed by the A(H1N)1 influenza virus and the global financial crisis.

It should be noted that commendable efforts were thereafter made by the PRs in Geneva and Tehran to accommodate all concerns with a view to facilitating the needed consensus on the Draft Joint Communiqué. The outcome of the commendable efforts of the PRs is evidenced by the fact that the text of the DJC (Revision 15) submitted to Your Excellencies for further consideration today is virtually a consensus document, except for a few paragraphs that were accepted *ad referendum*. These are:

- Paragraph 7 on the reform of the Bretton Woods institutions: Consensus was attained on the paragraph pending agreement by Brazil to a portion of the last sentence in track changes.
- Paragraphs 51 and 52 on the Palestinian situation: After exhaustive consultations among PRs, a compromise proposal, as later amended, enjoyed consensus and was accepted *ad referendum* pending the agreement of Argentina and Mexico.

The foregoing outstanding issues are therefore recommended to the Foreign Ministers for further consideration and resolution in order to transmit a clean text of the Draft Joint Communiqué to the Heads of State and Government for consideration and adoption.

At the resumed Meeting of the Personal Representatives in Tehran, it was recalled that a Panel of External Consultants was commissioned under the Algerian Chairmanship in May 2005 to examine the challenges facing the Group and its objectives, vision, orientation, working methods and activities, among others. It was therefore agreed that the Report of the Panel should be taken into account by the Task Force to be established by the in-coming Chairman of the Group. Furthermore, Personal Representatives agreed that the proposed amendments of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Draft Joint Communiqué of the 14<sup>th</sup> Summit, which were considered to have been submitted late, calling for the creation of a new international financial system and architecture in the wake of the adverse impacts of the recent financial and economic crises, should be attached as an annex to the Draft Joint Communiqué to be transmitted to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs for consideration. It was also agreed that a Working Group should be established in Geneva by the Personal Representatives to examine and make recommendations on the recent difficulties in finding countries willing to make offers to host Summits, a development that has of recent lengthened, *de facto*, the holding of Summits every two years.

I invite Your Excellencies to note that, in the course of our preparations for the meetings of the Foreign Ministers and the Summit, PRs raised and exchanged views on a number of procedural issues on the way the G-15 functions. In making any recommendations in this regard, PRs were urged to take into account the need for efficiency and certainty on the rules and procedures that member countries previously agreed to. The suggestions made in this respect by a number of PRs include the following:

- The need to reconsider the established formats of the meetings of the Foreign Ministers and the Plenary Sessions of Summits with a view to making them open to the public to enhance press coverage of the Group's activities and its international visibility. At the minimum, it was suggested that the representatives of the media should be allowed to cover the segments of the proceedings of the plenary sessions of the Summit devoted to general statements by Heads of

State and Government or Heads of Delegation. Since this was considered a new issue, it was agreed to refer it to the Foreign Ministers for further consideration and action.

- On the question of the invitation of Observers and special guests to Summit meetings, the procedure approved at the 13<sup>th</sup> Summit in 2006 in Havana that such invitations should be extended to the Chairman of the NAM and the G-77 was recalled.
- Unlike the current practice, Heads of Delegation, other than Presidents/Prime Ministers (or their deputies), should be allowed to participate in Summit Retreats. It was mentioned that PRs should be similarly allowed to be in attendance in a “listening room” at Summit Retreats, to enable them have a good grasp of the issues discussed and conclusions reached, for which they will be required to follow-up and implement. This new approach was considered to be flexible and pragmatic;
- The topic or theme chosen for a Summit Retreat should be communicated to member countries well in advance to ensure proper briefing of the Heads of State and Government;
- Recalling the Group’s past practice of dialogue with the G-8, that G-15 member countries belonging to the G-20 should serve as an interface between the two Groups to advance G-15 positions in the G-20.

In response to the foregoing proposals for some changes in the Group’s procedures, some PRs cautioned that time-tested practices, except in instances in which they are considered to be no longer working well or counter-productive, should not be abandoned and the importance of continuity in the traditions of the Group was underscored. Ministers are therefore invited to consider and act on these recommendations.

In conclusion, I wish to place on record my appreciation for the support and cooperation that Personal Representatives of all G-15 member countries in Geneva have given my government and me over the past three-and-a-half years and hope that they extend the same courtesies and support to the Personal Representative of Sri Lanka, my worthy successor.

I thank Your Excellencies for your kind attention.

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