



GROUP OF FIFTEEN
The Summit Level of Developing Countries

G-15/96/FM13/SR

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SUMMARY RECORDS OF THE CHAIRMAN
THIRTEENTH MEETING OF G-15 FOREIGN MINISTERS

Harare, 1 November 1996

The Thirteenth meeting of G-15 Foreign Ministers was held in Harare on 1 November 1996.

The meeting was chaired by H. E. Dr. I. S. G. Mudenge, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe.

Item 1. Adoption of the Agenda.

The meeting adopted the Draft Agenda as contained in document G-15/96/FM13/1.

Item 2. Report of the 33rd meeting of Personal Representatives (PRs) of Heads of State/Government (HOS/G).

H. E. Ambassador T. J. B. Jokonya, Chairman of the PRs of HOS/G presented an oral report on the 33rd meeting of the PRs which had taken place on 30-31 October.

Regarding the Draft Joint Communiqué, the Chairman of the PRs recalled the discussions that had taken place at the previous meetings in September 1996, in New York. He added that the document was the product of extensive discussions at four meetings of the PRs and nine meetings of the drafting committee and that the PRs found it satisfactory and acceptable. It was recognized that while the Draft Joint Communiqué lacked “political punch”, it was prudent not to reopen discussions on it. Rather, issues that had not been given due political emphasis in the Draft Joint Communiqué would be addressed in the Chairman’s Summary after the Retreat.

With regard to the proposed Budget for 1997, the PRs were recommending it for approval. The Chairman of the PRs informed the Ministers that the PRs had noted that at the current level the scale of assessment for 1997 would be US\$ 63,000 per member country. However, the PRs, in the interest of maintaining individual annual contributions at the current US\$ 58,000 were recommending to the Ministers that the deficit should be met from the reserves. Nevertheless, Ministers would have to pronounce themselves on the level of financial contributions and on the question of arrears, at an appropriate time. The Chairman of the PRs added that continued delays in payments of contributions of individual member countries would eventually cause serious financial problems to the G-15 and the Technical Support Facility (TSF).

The Chairman of the PRs recalled the useful discussions that had taken place in the PRs meeting on two documents before the Ministers, respectively, “Group of Fifteen’s past

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experiences and possible future directions in the 21st century” (G-15/96/FM13/3) and “Proposed management guidelines for the Technical Support Facility” (G-15/96/FM13/4). He suggested that the subject matter of the former document could be the focus of the Ministers’ deliberations. As to the latter document, the PRs were recommending it for approval as a first useful step in establishing appropriate guidelines for the management of the TSF. The Chairman of the PRs informed the Ministers that the restructuring of the TSF had been completed and that a dynamic team was now in place to assist the G-15. He introduced the staff members of the TSF to the Ministers.

Discussions at the PRs meeting had also make reference to the question of the periodicity of Summit meetings and the possible expansion of the membership of the G-15. The PRs agreed that those issues should be addressed by the HOS/G at the Retreat.

The meeting was also informed of the discussions and conclusions of the 3rd meeting of the Business and Investment Forum (BIF) and the 2nd meeting of the Governing Council of the Committee on Investment, Trade and Technology (CITT). The outcome of the deliberations of the meetings are contained in the respective summary records (G-15/96/BIF3/SR and G-15/96/CITT2/SR).

Logistical and organizational arrangements.

The Chairman referred to a leaflet issued by the Host Government containing the official programme of the Summit. He added that there had been no changes in the programme since discussions in September 1996, in New York. In addition, there was to be a programme for the Foreign Ministers for the time when the HOS/G would be away at the Retreat. This special programme for Foreign Ministers would involve a visit to Pamuzinda for game viewing and a possible visit to a platinum mine.

Indicative draft agenda for the Summit.

The Ministers agreed to recommend to the HOS/G the Indicate Draft Agenda for the Summit contained in document G-15/96/S6/L.1. Regarding the issues for possible discussions at the Retreat, a proposal was made and accepted to delete the word “negative” from the first item on the list. The item now reads: “Effects of globalisation in developing countries’ economies”.

Draft Joint Communiqué – “The Current International Trading System and the Prospects for the Promotion of Trade Among Developing Countries”.

The Chairman recalled the recommendation made by the PRs.

A proposal to insert the phrase “in particular those with extraterritorial effects” at the end of the second sentence of paragraph 31 of the Draft Joint Communiqué was accepted by the meeting. The Ministers recommended the adoption of the Joint Communiqué by the HOS/G.

Group of Fifteen’s past experiences and possible future directions in the 21st century.

Under this item, the meeting had before it document G-15/96/FM13/3 that had been prepared by the TSF under the guidance of the Chairman of the PRs. A previous version of the paper contained in document G-15/96/PR33/2, had been subject of discussions in the 33rd meeting of the PRs.

The paper was welcomed by delegations as a useful contribution to the discussions on the future of the G-15. It was felt that, after six years of existence, the time was ripe for the G-15 to review its past experiences and to evaluate possible directions for the future.

Views were expressed that the G-15 should revert to its original “raison d’être” and address not only its objectives of enhancing South-South cooperation, but also those relating to the North-South dialogue. The enhancement of South-South cooperation could be done through the implementation of a greater number of projects that would benefit not only G-15 countries, but also other developing countries that had a need for them, especially LDCs. On the other hand, it was recognized that even though the implementation of projects is what differentiates the G-15 from other such groups as the G-77 and the Non-Aligned Movement, the G-15 role in the North-South dialogue could be strengthened. For instance, the G-15 could take up two or three issues at each given year that would constitute its main platform for the Summit and for interaction with the North, in particular the G-7. There were many international economic issues of importance to developing countries on which the G-15 should pronounce itself such as, a multilateral agreement on investment, competition policies, unilateral measures with extraterritorial effects, government procurement, labour standards, etc. In this connection, some delegations felt that the level of participation at G-15 Summit meetings would to a large extent depend on the issues to be discussed at those meetings. Furthermore, the G-15 should be more proactive and pursue a dialogue with the G-7 more vigorously. To this end, it was pointed out that section 6 of the paper would need to be strengthened to reflect these ideas.

Two other issues that received considerable attention on the part of the Ministers were those relating to the periodicity of the G-15 Summit meetings and to a possible expansion of the membership of the Group.

On the question of periodicity of Summit meetings, Ministers were of two opinions. While some felt that Summits could be held once every two years with intersessional ministerial meetings of a length longer than of those normally held, others believed that the complexity and importance of the many issues on the international agenda demanded annual attention by the G-15 leaders.

On the issue of the possible expansion of the membership of the Group, it was generally felt that such expansion should not be an end in itself and that it should not be based on mathematical or geographical considerations only. It was important that whatever expansion was undertaken, it should add value to the ability of the G-15 in achieving its stated goals. Views were varied on the criteria for admission of new members. Some felt that future membership should be by invitation only. Others suggested that it could also be considered on the basis of interest expressed by applicant countries. A combination of the two criteria was also suggested. Another important point related to the potential contributions to the Group by a possible candidate. Questions were raised on whether membership should be open to countries that had a specific contribution to make to the critical mass of the G-15, or to countries that could derive benefits from G-15 membership, or to both. One delegation noted that West Asia was not represented in the G-15.

The Chairman recalled that the mandate to pursue the possible expansion of the G-15 membership had emanated from the Buenos Aires Summit. To this end, the current Chairman would be reporting to the Summit on the consultations that he had carried out. A

similar mandate would probably have to be given to the next Chairman of the G-15. With regard to the issue of the periodicity of the Summit Meetings, the Chairman noted that the question should be brought to the attention of the HOS/G for a decision. In concluding the discussions on the paper, the Chairman stated that the paper was an initial attempt to look at these important matters. He thanked all for expressing their views and noted that the comments made would certainly enrich the paper during its revision. He added that the Ministers should look at a new version of the paper at the next Summit in Kuala Lumpur.

Proposed management guidelines for the Technical Support Facility.

The Chairman introduced document G-15/96/FM13/4 under this item and considered it as an initial contribution to developing full management guidelines for the TSF. The meeting noted the document without any further discussions.

Budget estimates for 1997

The Chairman referred to document G-15/96/FM13/2 which contained the proposed budget for 1997. He added that, unless Ministers wished to address any policy issues regarding the budget, he would consider it approved. A proposal was made and accepted that the TSF could, in the future, seek financial support for G-15 projects from multilateral financial institutions.

Indonesia and Mexico announced that they had transmitted their 1996 financial contribution to the G-15. A contribution of US\$ 80,000 from Nigeria was being transferred to Geneva. Senegal announced that its contributions for 1996 and 1997 had been deposited. Jamaica announced that it had deposited US\$ 86,000 and that it would undertake to reduce its arrears as soon as possible.

Item 3. General debate

It was agreed that this item had been subsumed in the discussions under the item on the Group of Fifteen's past experiences and possible future directions in the 21st century.

Item 4. Any other business

The Chairman stated that intensive consultations were underway among the countries from the Latin America and Caribbean group on the host for the 8th Summit in 1998.

The Chairman closed the meeting announcing that it was now confirmed that the Sixth Summit Meeting of the Group of Fifteen would have the participation of 5 HOS/G and 4 Vice Presidents.
