



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

**G-15/97/FM14/2**

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**FOURTEENTH MEETING OF THE  
MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE GROUP OF FIFTEEN**  
Harare, 23 September 1997

**SUMMARY RECORDS BY THE CHAIRMAN**

1. The fourteenth meeting of the Foreign Ministers (FM) of the Group of Fifteen was held on 23 September 1997, in New York. The meeting was chaired by the Honourable Dato' Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia. In his introductory remarks, the Chairman welcomed his colleagues and members of delegations from other G-15 member countries. He informed the meeting that delegations had indicated to him a preference, for reasons of expediency, for each delegation to make only one intervention at the meeting, covering all the items on the agenda.
2. Referring to the VII Summit of the Group of Fifteen, the Chairman expressed his hope that all his colleagues would attend the Summit meetings. In this connection, he informed the meeting that a separate retreat was being organized for the Foreign Ministers at the VII Summit. He also reminded his fellow Foreign Ministers that their main task in the lead-up to the VII Summit was to finalize all submissions that are to be put before the Heads of State/Government (HOS/G) for their adoption.
3. The 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of FMs adopted the provisional agenda contained in document G-15/97/FM14/1 as presented by the Chairman. As proposed by the Chairman, the meeting agreed to consider the report of the 37<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Personal Representatives (PRs) first.
4. In his report, the Chairman of the PRs informed the FMs that the 37<sup>th</sup> meeting had made revisions to the paper on the "Group of Fifteen's past experience and possible future directions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century - Conclusions and recommendations" and that the revised paper was before the Ministers for their approval under cover of document G-15/97/L.4/Rev.1. Amendments had also been made to the indicative draft provisional agendas for meetings at the VII Summit; the revised drafts were contained in document G.15/97/L.5/Rev.1 and were before the FMs for their endorsement. No objections were raised to these revised documents.
5. Regarding the meeting of the Ministers of Trade/Economics, the Personal Representatives recommended that, in accordance with the institutional structure of the G-15,

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the Ministers of Trade should submit their report to the Foreign Ministers at their 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, instead of submitting it directly to the HOS/G as originally suggested in the indicative draft provisional agenda of the plenary session of the HOS/G. In this connection, the Chairman of the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Foreign Ministers noted that, as a matter of procedure, the report of the meeting of the Ministers of Trade/Economics would be transmitted to the Foreign Ministers for their information, rather than discussion, and that it would be contained within the report of the FMs to the HOS/G. Nevertheless, the actual report of the meeting of the Ministers of Trade/Economics would be presented to the HOS/G by the Chairman of the Trade Ministers meeting.

6. On the matter of the proposed 1998 budget for the G-15, the Draft Joint Communiqué and the Draft Financial and Administrative Rules, the Chairman of the PRs informed the FMs that the PRs had recommended that these documents be revisited at a further meeting of the PRs, to be held upon their return to Geneva. The full text of the report by the Chairman of the PRs is contained in Annex 1 to these records. Following this report, the floor was opened for interventions by delegations.

7. Egypt conveyed to the meeting the greetings and apologies of Foreign Minister Amre Moussa who was accompanying President Hosni Mubarak on an official visit to Russia. Egypt noted the importance of South-South cooperation vis-à-vis globalization and reaffirmed its commitment to the G-15. In this context, Egypt informed the meeting that it would be participating in a major way in the G-15 Trade Exhibition and the Business Workshop to be held in Kuala Lumpur, parallel to the VII Summit. Egypt further emphasized the need for the G-15 to direct more attention to developments in the WTO, especially to ensure that undertakings made in the Uruguay Round which are of benefit to developing countries are fulfilled by industrialized countries. In this respect, Egypt noted that the UNCTAD Annual Report had indicated that the gap between the rich and the poor had been widening; the Report had also identified new protectionist trends by developed countries which Egypt denounced. Egypt commended the UNCTAD Report for consideration by the Foreign Ministers. On the matter of North-South dialogue, Egypt proposed that consideration be given to holding dialogue between Senior Officials from G-15 and G-7 countries. It also stressed that the G-15 should lend greater support to the least developed countries.

8. Minister of State for External Affairs of India Saleem Iqbal Shervani welcomed the attendance of Kenya in the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of FMs and expressed the importance which India attaches to Kenya's membership in the G-15. The statement by the Minister covered a number of topics of importance to the Group of Fifteen. A copy of that presentation is contained in Annex 2 to these records.

9. Indonesia conveyed to the meeting the apologies of Foreign Minister Ali Alatas who was unfortunately unable to attend. Indonesia expressed the importance which it attached to poverty alleviation and proposed that this be an issue for consideration by the HOS/G during their Summit Retreat. Indonesia welcomed the meeting of Ministers of Trade/Economics planned for the Summit and called for more sectoral ministerial meetings of the G-15. In its view, this would contribute to the G-15 being perceived as a concrete international cooperation group. As regards the Draft Joint Communiqué, Indonesia stressed that while that is an evolving document, it was vital that the Draft Joint Communiqué be finalized in good time for the VII Summit. A number of comments were also made by Indonesia on the

conclusions and recommendations of the paper on “Group of Fifteen’s past experience and possible future directions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (G-15/97/L.4/Rev.1). On the matter of frequency of Summits, Indonesia noted that the G-15 should not feel compelled to meet every year just because this was the practice of the G-7. In its view, the G-15/G-7 interaction would not be adversely affected if G-15 Summits were held once every two years. On this issue, the Chairman clarified that the decision to hold annual G-15 Summits was not necessarily attributable only to the possible G-7 interface. Rather, it was necessary for the G-15 HOS/G to meet annually to give the necessary guidance to the work of the Group. Nevertheless, he added, if the G-7 leaders were able to make the time to meet every year, G-15 HOS/G should be able to do the same. On possible expansion of membership, Indonesia reiterated the importance it attaches to the principle of geographical balance. On the matter of projects, it highlighted that “one-off” activities could also be beneficial and should not be dismissed.

10. Foreign Minister of Brazil Luiz Felipe Lampreia informed the meeting that Brazil would participate in the VII Summit in a very substantial manner, thus reaffirming its commitment to the G-15. He welcomed the meeting of Ministers of Trade/Economics to be held during the Summit as an extremely important initiative. In the view of Brazil, it is in the area of trade that the G-15 can be more concrete and focused. Foreign Minister Lampreia proposed that, in light of current developments in Asia, it would be opportune for the HOS/G to discuss the volatility of capital markets and the risk of capital flight at their Summit Retreat. He added that the currency problems currently faced by the Southeast Asian member countries of the G-15 could easily be faced by any G-15 member country.

11. Senegal transmitted to the meeting the regrets of Foreign Minister Moustapha Niasse who was unable to attend the meeting. Senegal reaffirmed its commitment to the G-15 and in this context informed of its preference for G-15 Summits to be held every year. Senegal also drew attention to the fact that it had decided hold a first expert meeting on the pilot project on transfer of technology, and that arrangements were being made for that meeting to be held in Dakar, Senegal.

12. Algeria conveyed the regrets of Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf who had been unable to attend the meeting. It informed the meeting that the President of Algeria would be heading the delegation of Algeria to the VII Summit.

13. Before concluding the meeting, the Chairman reminded delegations of the importance of the participation of their countries and the private sector in their countries in the G-15 Trade Exhibition being organized within the framework of the VII Summit. He noted that the active participation of the private sector in the work of the G-15 would give meaning and substance to South-South cooperation, particularly in the areas of trade and investment.

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**Annex I****THIRTY-SEVENTH MEETING OF THE PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVES  
OF THE HEADS OF STATE/GOVERNMENT OF THE  
GROUP OF FIFTEEN**

23 September 1997

**Oral report by the Chairman of the 37<sup>th</sup> meeting of the PRs  
to the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs****Item 2 - Preparations for the VII Summit of the Group of Fifteen - briefing by Malaysia  
on logistical and other aspects of the Summit**

- Malaysia has distributed a revised version of the Aide-memoire on the arrangements for the VII Summit.
- Ten countries have confirmed the participation of their Ministers of Trade/Economics in the meeting of 31 October; it is now also confirmed that the Director-General of the WTO and the Secretary-General of UNCTAD will be in attendance to hold discussions with the Ministers. In addition, in response to a request by UNIDO, the PRs have recommended that, should the Secretary-General of that organization wish to attend the VII Summit, it would have to be in the context of the meeting of the Ministers of Trade, and the meeting of the Governing Council of the Committee on Investment, Trade and Technology (CITT).
- No confirmed numbers are available for the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Foreign Ministers but attendance is expected from all G-15 countries.
- The Retreat will be in Malaka. Participation in the Retreat will be limited to HOS/G. According to the established practice in the G-15, Vice-Presidents and Deputy Prime Ministers would also be able to attend should there not be a quorum. Malaysia will make it possible for Ministers to be in attendance at the Retreat, but not to participate in the discussions.
- Fourteen countries have confirmed participation in the G-15 Trade EXPO to be held in conjunction with the VII Summit.
- **Request for “observership”** - The PRs also discussed a request received from a Latin American country, non-member of the G-15, to participate in the Summit. Concern was expressed that participation by any country as observer might be construed as a first step towards membership. In that connection, it was recalled that the G-15 has decided that, should expansion of its membership be pursued, the potential new member should come from Asia. Furthermore, given that the G-15 has no current provisions for the participation of observers in its meetings, the PRs decided that the status quo should be maintained and the request should be declined.
- **Closing of the Summit** - It was agreed that the concluding statement of the Chairman which is prepared on the basis of the discussions in the Retreat is not a negotiated text.

Informal consultations might be undertaken on potentially delicate issues as that is the normal procedure for any Chairman. There will be a press conference immediately after the closing of the Summit.

### **Item 3 - Consideration of the indicative draft provisional agendas for the VII Summit**

The PRs were primarily concerned with the provisional agenda of the meeting of the Ministers of Trade not least because this is the first time the Ministers will be meeting in the context of a G-15 Summit. Even though the provisional agenda had already been circulated to G-15 Trade Ministers by the Minister of Trade of Malaysia, the PRs felt that they had a responsibility in helping to shape the agenda of the meeting.

**India** circulated a proposal for the possible inclusion of additional items on the provisional agenda. The view was expressed that item 5 of the provisional agenda might be best placed on the agenda of the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Foreign Ministers. It was also suggested that a sub-item regarding the report of the meeting of the Business and Investment Forum (BIF) held in August, in Harare, should be included under item 4. Others indicated that their delegations were pleased with the agenda as it was.

**Malaysia** suggested that all proposals be transmitted to its Minister of Trade for a final decision on the contents of the provisional agenda, given that the Minister might have directly received proposals from other delegations of which the 37<sup>th</sup> meeting would not be aware. Nevertheless, the PRs decided that they will re-visit the provisional agenda for the meeting of the Trade Ministers once again in Geneva in the next few weeks.

- **Reporting by the Ministers of Trade** - The meeting decided that, in accordance with the institutional structure of the G-15, the Ministers of Trade should submit their report to the Foreign Ministers at their 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, instead of submitting it directly to the HOS/G as originally suggested in the indicative draft provisional agenda of the plenary meeting of the HOS/G. Subsequently, the Chairman of the Ministers of Trade would be given the opportunity of presenting the report of the meeting to the HOS/G in the context of the presentation of the report of the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Foreign Ministers.

- **Indicative draft provisional agendas of 15<sup>th</sup> FMs meeting and plenary of the HOS/G** - The PRs agreed that the item on the report of the Trade Ministers would be moved from the indicative draft provisional agenda of the plenary of the HOS/G to the indicative agenda of the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Foreign Ministers. A revised version of the relevant document is before the Ministers as contained in document **G-15/97/L.5/Rev.1**.

### **Item 4 - Draft Joint Communiqué of the VII Summit Meeting of the Group of Fifteen - consideration of the draft to be presented to the Foreign Ministers at their 14<sup>th</sup> meeting on 23 September 1997**

The meeting had before it the fourth draft of the Joint Communiqué, as well as a written contribution by **India** with proposed amendments to the draft.

It was felt that there was not enough time to consider not only the proposals by India, but also oral suggestions made by other delegations. The meeting decided that it would be necessary for the PRs to re-visit the fourth draft once again before passing it on to the

Foreign Ministers. Therefore, the PRs would meet in Geneva in the next few weeks to look at the fourth draft in the light of the comments made at the 37<sup>th</sup> meeting and the proposals submitted by members.

**Item 5 - Group of Fifteen's past experiences and possible future directions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century - consideration of the final draft to be presented to the Foreign Ministers at their 14<sup>th</sup> meeting**

The PRs considered the paper containing conclusions and recommendations on this subject to be very useful. Amendments were made to improve the text and make it more comprehensive in a few areas. The revised paper is being submitted to the Foreign Ministers for their consideration and subsequent transmittal to the HOS/G for adoption at the VII Summit. It is contained in document **G-15/97/L.4/Rev.1**.

**Item 6 - Administrative, financial and management issues: Draft Financial and Administrative Rules of the Group of Fifteen; Draft Staff Rules and Regulations of the Group of Fifteen; Proposed Budget for 1998**

The original intention had been for the 37<sup>th</sup> meeting of the PRs to finalize the Draft Financial and Administrative Rules of the G-15 for transmittal to the Foreign Ministers at their 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. Nevertheless, since some additional proposals have been made for the refinement of the Rules, the PRs have mandated the Troika, upon returning to Geneva, to consider the suggestions, revise the current draft accordingly and circulate the revision to members delegations as soon as possible. That will allow delegations sufficient time to check these latest amendments before the Summit in Kuala Lumpur. The aim now is to have the Financial and Administrative Rules adopted at the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Foreign Ministers to be held immediately prior to the Summit.

A similar decision was taken with regard to the Proposed Budget for 1998. The PRs indicated that it would be necessary, before approving the budget, to look at the status of contributions by members and at the current status of interest income accrued from the investments of the G-15. It was decided that the PRs will then revert to the Proposed Budget for 1998 in Geneva in the next few weeks with a view to solving some of the issues raised.

As to the Draft Staff Rules and Regulations of the Group of Fifteen, it was decided to refer them to the Geneva Open-ended Working Group that was established for the purpose of considering rules for the G-15. In carrying out its work, the Group will take into account general comments made at the 37<sup>th</sup> meeting of the PRs, the reply received by the Chairman from the United Nations Office at Geneva, as well as any contributions submitted by member countries.

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