
17th Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs
of the Group of Fifteen
New York, 22 September 1998

**REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MINISTERS OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE GROUP OF FIFTEEN
ON THEIR SEVENTEENTH MEETING**
New York, 22 September 1998

1. The Seventeenth meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Group of Fifteen was held on Tuesday, 22 September 1998, in New York, under the Chairmanship of The Honourable Seymour E. Mullings, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica.

Item 2 - Report by the Chairman of the Personal Representatives on their 48th meeting
and

Item 3 (a) - (b) - Preparations for the IX Summit

2. The Foreign Ministers (FMs) received the report by the Chairman of the Personal Representatives (PRs), Ambassador K. G. Anthony Hill of Jamaica on the conclusions of the 48th meeting of the PRs held on 21 September 1998, in New York, for reference see attached document G-15/98/FM17/2 also issued as G-15/98/PR48/2.

3. The presentation of the Report by the Chairman of the Personal Representatives was followed by open discussion by the FMs. The following views were expressed:

- **Technical and economic cooperation:** India informed that it has established a secretariat for the G-15 Standards and Quality Forum. Zimbabwe requested that a meeting of the BIF be held in Jamaica preceding the meeting of the Committee on Investment Trade and Technology (CITT), on 5 February 1999. Zimbabwe indicated that it would provide assistance for this meeting. It was also expressed that the private sector role of the BIF should be encouraged and its relationship with the CITT further discussed. In line with this, an interface between the BIF and the G-15 Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry should be established.
- **G-24/G-15 consultations:** The FMs supported the proposal to hold a meeting between the G-24 and the G-15. The FMs noted that the IMF/World Bank meetings of 3-6 October 1998 will be an important negotiating forum on the international monetary and financial system, and provides a good opportunity for the G-15 in

consultation with the G-24 to strengthen and coordinate their positions on this subject. The FMs also took note that there is an opportunity for members of the G-15 in the G-22 to consult with each other on the US initiative on reform of the international monetary and financial system.

- **Dialogue with the G-8:** The FMs thanked Jamaica for the initiative of holding a meeting between the Chairman of the Personal Representatives and the United Kingdom G-8 Sherpa. The FMs viewed this initiative as a positive step forward in dialogue between the G-15 and the G-8. The FMs expressed their wish to be kept informed of further exchanges between the G-15 and the G-8, including the Note under preparation by the Chairman of the Personal Representatives. The FMs highlighted the importance of giving further consideration to the level, format and scenario of any G-15/G-8 meetings. The FMs also noted that in such dialogue it is necessary to make clear that the G-15 does not represent all developing countries, just as the G-8 does not represent all developed countries.
- **Expansion of membership of the G-15:** The FMs noted the conclusions of the 48th meeting of the PRs. Egypt and Senegal expressed the view that the membership of the G-15 should remain open. India reaffirmed its position that the G-15 needs to consolidate its membership in accordance with the decision of the VII Summit, Kuala Lumpur, 1997.
- **Proposed themes/issues for the Joint Communiqué of the IX Summit:** A broad range of views were expressed by the FMs. They nevertheless agreed that priority should be given in the Joint Communiqué to only a few issues, and that it is neither feasible nor desirable for the Joint Communiqué to cover all the themes/issues contained in document G-15/98/FM17/INF.1. The FMs proposed that where possible issues should be clustered. The FMs stressed that the G-15 should avoid issues where consensus is fragile and focus on areas where it can make the largest contribution. The FMs highlighted the necessity to keep on the agenda of the G-15 the international financial crisis and its serious consequences for developing countries. In accordance with the enumeration of issues in document G-15/98/FM17/INF.1, it was considered that issues 5 (a), (b), (h) and (k) could be clustered under the subject of international monetary and financial system. In addition importance was also attached to issues 5 (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g). On the subject of the social impact of globalization and liberalization, it was highlighted that this matter was already dealt with in the United Nations General Assembly. Divergent views were expressed as to whether the issues of “terrorism” and “climate change” should be included.
- **Substantive arrangements for the IX Summit in Jamaica:** It was confirmed that the IX Summit would be held over the period 10-12 February 1999. Some countries expressed the view that it would be preferable for the Opening Ceremony of the IX Summit to be held before the Retreat. The Chairman explained that the reason for the new approach is to give visiting Heads of State and Government an opportunity to rest and consult informally, but undertook to give the matter further consideration.

4. The Chairman in his summary identified the following conclusions of the discussion on Item 2 and 3 of the agenda:

- (i) **Schedule of meetings for the IX Summit** - The dates of 10-12 February 1999 were confirmed as the period for the IX Summit. The meetings of the BIF and of Trade and Economic Ministers of G-15 countries would be included in the schedule of meetings leading up to the IX Summit.
- (ii) **Scenario for the IX Summit** - Jamaica will give further consideration to the feasibility of having the Opening Ceremony immediately before the Heads of State and Government go on their Retreat.
- (iii) **Expansion of membership** - G-15 should consolidate its membership, in line with the decision of the VII Summit, while not necessarily closing the door on new members.
- (iv) **Joint Communiqué for the IX Summit** - The international financial crisis raised at both the VII and VIII Summit of the G-15 in Kuala Lumpur, 1997 and Cairo, 1998, has grown steadily worse. This should be the main focus of the Joint Communiqué around which the adverse impact of globalization and liberalization on developing countries would be built. The issue of “terrorism” which is of interest to all G-15 members would be given due consideration.

Item 4 - Administrative, financial and personnel matters: 1999 Budget

5. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs adopted the 1999 Budget for the Group of Fifteen as contained in document G-15/98/BDGT99.
