



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

**G-15/06/FM28/2**

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**REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN**  
**OF THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
**OF THE GROUP OF FIFTEEN ON THEIR TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING**  
Havana, Cuba, 12 September 2006

1. The 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Group of Fifteen was held on 12 September 2006 in Havana, Cuba, under the Chairmanship of H. E. Mohammed Bedjaoui, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria.
2. In his opening remarks, the Chairman cordially welcomed the Ministers and sought their kind support and cooperation in ensuring the success of the meeting. He remarked further that, the current international environment remained dangerous, partly as a consequence of the attempt by a few rich countries to impose policies on developing countries without adequate understanding of the local situation. He further remarked that as an important developing countries' grouping, he hoped that the actions and consultations among Foreign Ministers of the G-15 during its current consultations would set an example for other organizations and regional groupings to emulate. The Chairman also informed Ministers about the activities undertaken by the Group during the stewardship of the G-15, including the Workshops on *E-governance and ICT Applications and Industry and Rural and Agricultural Development and Management of Water Resources*, annual meetings of the G-15 Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Services, initiation of the reform of the Group and technical cooperation with some UN agencies and the South Centre.
3. In their deliberations, the Ministers attended to a range of issues dealing with the management of the Group's affairs. These included action on the Draft Recommendations submitted by the Personal Representatives on the Report of the Panel of External Consultants on the Examination of the Challenges Facing the Group and Evaluation of its Projects for South-South Cooperation, review of and action on the preparatory activities for the 13<sup>th</sup> Summit, assessment of the various substantive arrangements for the successful hosting of the Summit, including its Indicative Provisional Agenda and the Draft Joint Communiqué; as well as required actions on administrative and management issues. Details of the proceedings of the meeting are presented in this report.

**Report by the Chairman of the Personal Representatives of the Heads of State and Government of the Group of Fifteen on the activities of the Group**

4. The Ministers received, with appreciation, and considered the Report of the Chairman of the Personal Representatives (PRs) on the preoccupations of the Personal Representatives of Heads of

State and Government of the Group of Fifteen in their meetings and the implementation of various activities of the Group under the Chairmanship of Algeria. In particular, the Report gave account of efforts undertaken on the mandated reform process initiated to revitalize the Group. It also highlighted the preparations made to ensure the successful hosting of the 13<sup>th</sup> Summit. The Ministers expressed appreciation to the Personal Representatives for their commendable efforts and took note of the Report of the Chairman of the Personal Representatives.

### **Exchange of views on the current international situation**

5. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs had a productive exchange of views on the current international situation. In their interventions, they observed that their 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting here in Havana provided them a rare opportunity for a fruitful exchange of views on the major trends and patterns in the international economic and geopolitical environment and their impact on developing countries. In light of the foregoing, they reaffirmed their resolve to work together in protecting and advancing the interests of our countries in the global arena. Some of the key observations and suggestions put forward by the Ministers in the course of their deliberations include the following:

- The need to strive for increase in intra South trade, investment flows and technical cooperation;
- The importance of developing a mechanism to monitor aid flows and the need to consider solutions to address the harmful effects of the debt burden on poor countries;
- The setback to the development prospects as a result of the suspension of WTO negotiations under the Doha Round and the immediate imperative for early resumption of the negotiations with greater focus on its development dimension;
- The significance of upholding the multilateral integrity of the United Nations and to the need to sustain our active participation in its reform;
- The upholding of the development dimension in international organizations like WIPO and the Bretton Woods institutions and their democratization;
- The need to address the devastating impact of unilateralism on international peace and security as exemplified by recent events in the Middle-East;
- The urgency of finding innovative financial schemes to fight diseases like HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis;
- The critical importance of agricultural and rural development and water management for the removal of poverty in developing countries.

### **Consideration of the Draft Joint Communiqué of the XIII Summit of the Group**

6. In their consideration of the Draft Joint Communiqué of the XIII Summit submitted by the PRs, the Ministers acknowledged that, by and large, the Draft Joint Communiqué was balanced, precise and focused on the core concerns of the Group. Without prejudice to the foregoing, a few paragraphs of the Draft Joint Communiqué posed some difficulties in the determined efforts to forge the required consensus at the meeting of the Foreign Ministers. While some of these paragraphs were accepted with reservations, others were not accepted and therefore placed in square brackets and referred to this Summit by the Ministers for further consideration and resolution.

The paragraphs accepted with reservations, particularly due to their phrasing, were the following:

- Paragraph 34 dealing with the 4<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum held in Mexico in March 2006;
- Paragraphs 49 and 52 dealing with the recent developments in the Middle East.

However, despite considerable efforts by Ministers, no consensus could be reached on paragraphs 31 and 32 relating to energy. Ministers therefore agreed to retain paragraphs 31 and 32 in square

brackets and forward the Draft Joint Communiqué as contained in document **G-15/06/DJC/Rev.4** to the Heads of State and Government for further consideration and resolution.

**Consideration of the Draft Recommendations submitted by the Personal Representatives on the Report of the Panel of External Consultants on the Examination of the Challenges Facing the Group and Evaluation of its Projects for South-South Cooperation**

7. With a view to retooling the Group in the light of the rapidly changing global dispensation and the decision of the 12<sup>th</sup> Summit to revitalize the Group, particularly in the area of South-South Cooperation, the Personal Representatives were mandated to engage external consultants to re-examine the situation of the Group. This task was successfully accomplished with the submission by the Personal Representatives of Draft Recommendations on the Report of the Panel of External Consultants on the Examination of the Challenges Facing the Group and Evaluation of its Projects for South-South Cooperation.

8. The Ministers gave serious consideration to the significance of the various Draft Recommendations on the needed reform and endorsed them for submission to the Summit for consideration and approval. It is important to highlight the principal Draft Recommendations that call for special attention as follows:

- To Reaffirm that the prevailing international environment underscored the continuing relevance of the Group and the need to further energize it by adapting it to the new circumstances and the changed global situation in order to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by globalization and to deal effectively with its downsides, while maintaining its overall purpose and objectives;
- To focus the agenda and documentation of the G-15 on development issues and South-South Cooperation, while not excluding the political dimensions of development issues;
- To hold the Summits biennially, but if a host country offers to host it earlier, this proposal would be reviewed by Personal Representatives with a view to making an appropriate recommendation;
- To transfer the functions of the Committee on Investment, Trade and Technology (CITT) and the G-15 Commission to the Personal Representatives in the light of the difficulties experienced in operating these organs;
- To rationalize ongoing cooperative projects by retaining only those that are feasible and of interest to the generality of member countries. Ministers noted with satisfaction the undertaking by Iran, in its capacity as incoming Chairman, to initiate follow up actions in this regard;
- To recognize that the proposals to establish a South Bank, University of the South and South Television Network that emanated from the 12<sup>th</sup> Summit are being operationalized successfully in the Latin American region. Ministers heard a brief presentation on a South Television network, TeleSur, operational in some Latin American countries.
- To note that the proposal to establish a G-15 Africa Cooperation Fund enjoys broad support among member countries. As a result, Ministers agreed to recommend to Heads of State and Government to launch the proposed G-15 Africa Fund at this Summit. To this end, a paragraph is included in the Draft Joint Communiqué, on the Establishment of the G-15 Africa Cooperation Fund;
- To recognize that priority attention should be accorded to the consolidation and revitalization of the Group. There was agreement on the principle of future expansion should there be an expression of strong interest by a non-member country. In such a case, the specific request would be considered on its merit.

9. Ministers noted the suggestion by Senegal that the draft recommendation on CITT should be revisited. By and large, the Ministers considered the overall reform package as relevant and timely in order to better reposition the Group in the pursuit of its objectives amidst the new challenges and opportunities presented by the new international order. From the sentiments expressed in the meeting, it is important to stress that welcome as these reforms may be, the litmus test lies in the extent to which member countries are prepared to make them work to enable the Group to realize its purposes. In this regard, the significance of strengthened political commitment in using the Group as an effective vehicle in pursuing its common cause cannot be overemphasized. It is therefore incumbent on all member countries to demonstrate greater preparedness and enthusiasm in forging the needed consensus, through increased consultations and coordination of positions on issues of common interest; active participation in the activities of the Group; as well as better readiness in meeting the financial obligations of membership. It was felt that with the foregoing and the faithful implementation of the proposed reform package, our Group would be better placed to establish the relevance and international visibility that we all yearn for. The Summit is therefore invited to consider and approve the Draft Recommendations on the Report of the Panel of External Consultants on the Examination of the Challenges Facing the Group and Evaluation of its Projects for South-South Cooperation, contained in document **G-15/06/XIII/3**.

#### **Consideration of the Report of the Workshop on Rural and Agricultural Development and the Management of Water Resources**

10. The Ministers received and considered the Report of the G-15 Seminar/Workshop on Rural and Agricultural Development and the Management of Water Resources, which was organized in Geneva by the Government of Algeria as part of the preparatory process for the 13<sup>th</sup> Summit. While noting the conclusions of the Seminar/Workshop with keen interest, Ministers agreed to recommend that the Summit could request the incoming Chairman of the Group to organize a follow-up meeting at a higher decision-making level to review the conclusions formulated by the Experts at this Seminar/Workshop and to explore the possibility of establishing a G-15 mechanism or clearinghouse for the exchange of experiences on rural and agricultural development and the management of water resources aimed at enhancing best practices and information sharing among member countries.

#### **Consideration of Financial Matters:**

##### **(a) Financial Report for the year 2005**

11. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs received and took note of the Financial Report for the year 2005 prepared by the official Auditors of the Group of Fifteen, as contained in document **G-15/06/AUD**.

##### **(b) Financial Situation of the Group and the Review of the Level of Annual Contribution as mandated by the 27<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs**

12. The Chairman drew the attention of the Ministers to the persisting precarious financial situation of the Group arising principally from the significant level of unpaid contributions. He noted that it was worrying to note that, in spite of the urgent appeal made at their last meeting in September 2005 in New York, the situation is yet to improve, as unpaid arrears now stand at US\$551,220. The Ministers were informed that after detailed debate and discussion, the PRs have recommended that in addition to retaining the current level of annual contributions, members in arrears make maximum effort to fulfill their outstanding obligations by end 2006 or at least provide the G-15 with a schedule for the payment of the total amount of their arrears. The PRs also

recommended that a Code of Conduct on financial responsibility of membership be drawn up. Ministers therefore considered and approved the recommendations of the PRs in this regard. Ministers also considered and agreed on further measures to be taken to ensure the prompt fulfillment of financial obligations by member countries in arrears.

**(c) Proposed Budget for 2007**

13. The Chairman formally presented to the meeting, for consideration and approval, the Proposed Budget of the Group for the year 2007 as recommended by the Personal Representatives. He noted that the Proposed Budget, contained in document **G-15/06/FM28/7**, amounting to US\$ 950,884, was within the range of the approved budgets for the last five years. The Ministers subsequently approved the Proposed Budget for 2007, taking into account the financing option recommended by the PRs as reflected in the report of the Chairman of the Personal Representatives.

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14. At the conclusion of the consideration of the substantive items of the agenda of the meeting, Foreign Ministers formally adopted the set of Draft Recommendations submitted by the Personal Representatives (document **G-15/06/FM28/4**).

**Other matters**

15. In keeping with the convention of regional rotation, Ministers from the Latin American/Caribbean region were requested to consult among themselves on the issue of deciding the host for the XVth Summit of the G-15 to be held following the next Summit to be hosted by Iran. It was agreed that pending the resolution of this matter, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuelan would continue to represent that region on the Troika Board of Supervisors.

16. Ministers noted the report on Colombia's decision to withdraw from the Group and adopted the recommendation, among others, that the Troika PRs would contact the Government of Colombia and convey the general sentiment that the Group looks forward to a time when this country can overcome its present difficulties and rejoin the G-15. The Troika will equally examine with Colombia the implications of this decision on the financial situation of the Group.

17. Before adjourning the meeting, the Ministers commended the Government of Algeria for its exemplary stewardship of the affairs of the Group during its Chairmanship. They also expressed their appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Cuba for the warm hospitality extended to them and the excellent facilities provided for their meeting.

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