



GROUP OF FIFTEEN
The Summit Level of Developing Countries

SEVENTH MEETING OF THE
MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE GROUP OF FIFTEEN
New Delhi, 11 December 1993

SUMMARY RECORDS BY THE CHAIRMAN

The Meeting was Chaired by H. E. Mr. Dinesh Singh, Minister of External Affairs, Government of India. A list of delegates to the Meeting appears as **Annex A**.

The Chairman welcomed all delegates to the Meeting.

A moments silence was observed in tribute to the memory of the late President Houphouët-Boigny of Côte-d'Ivoire, who died recently.

The Chairman, in his opening statement, expressed disappointment at the postponement of the Summit and emphasized that it was important for this Meeting of Ministers to send the appropriate signals regarding the continued commitment of all member countries to the goals and objectives of the Group.

Referring to the earlier Meeting of Personal Representatives, the Chairman stated that the officials present at the Meeting had come to the conclusion that the insufficient quorum and the consequent postponement of the Summit occurred because of an unfortunate coincidence of circumstances.

India's decision to reschedule the Fourth Summit in New Delhi in the first week of April 1994 was a reaffirmation of this country's faith in the G-15 process.

Elaborating on the *raison d'être* and vision of the Group, the Chairman observed that the G-15 had a role to play as a building block for economic and political relations on a transregional basis; as a catalyst and agent of change in South-South relations and cooperation; and as a partner in the constructive dialogue with the North on key issues affecting peace and development in the post Cold War era. In this regard, the Fourth Summit Meeting would mark a crucial stage in the evolution of the G-15's role and future activities.

Underlining that this opportunity should be used for the substantive preparations for the postponed Summit, the Chairman referred specifically to the Draft Joint Communiqué, highlighting that it sought to identify the major themes, events, developments and economic and political issues of concern and interest to all member countries of the Group. The content of the Draft Joint Communiqué should constitute a message that would go out to Governments, business communities and peoples of member countries and those of all other countries, both in the North and the South. The full text of the Chairman's message appears as **Annex B**.

The Chairman provided a brief review of the main items of the Draft Provisional Agenda for the Meeting which was adopted as presented (**Annex C**).

Item 1. Briefing by the Chairman on the postponement of the Fourth Summit Meeting.

The Chairman of the Meeting requested the Chairman of the 17th Meeting of Personal Representatives and Personal Representative of the Head of Government of India to brief those present on the outcome of discussions on this item, which took place at that earlier meeting held on 8-10 December 1993. Referring to the Report of this meeting, a copy of which was made available to all those present, the following points were highlighted:

- It was agreed that the insufficient quorum for the Summit should in no way be perceived as a lack of commitment of member countries to the goals and objectives of the Group, but was a result of an unfortunate coincidence of circumstances. However, while the postponement of the Meeting should in no way be linked to the future work and prospects of the G-15, there was a need to examine questions relating to the institutional and substantive aspects of the Group. It was recognized by the Personal Representatives that commitment remained meaningless unless translated into concrete action, especially if the credibility and effectiveness of the Group was to be maintained and enhanced. It was also recognized that attendance at the postponed Summit would be a litmus test of the Group's long-term commitment and purpose.
- The Personal Representatives had noted with appreciation the offer made by India for the holding of the postponed Summit in the second half of March next year. In this context, it was accepted that the Government of India would indicate two time slots within this period for consideration by the 14 Heads of State/Government. Once the dates are fixed, India would proceed on the basis that, if it does not have an assurance of a quorum within a given deadline, then it will not have the Summit. It will then be for the next Chairman to decide on how to deal with it.

The Meeting reiterated the consensus reached by the Personal Representatives and expressed its great appreciation to the Government of India for the excellent arrangements and tremendous effort and resources expended for the convening of the Summit in December 1993. It was emphasized that the inability of some Heads of State/Government to attend the Summit, in some cases, after confirmation of attendance, was indeed entirely due to an unfortunate coincidence of circumstances. Taking into consideration a request made by the delegation of Chile, it was agreed that the postponed Summit should be held sometime between the 15 March and the first week of April 1994.

Item 2. Future organization of the work and activities of the G-15, including Summit Meetings.

At the request of the Chairman of the Meeting, the Chairman of the 17th Meeting of Personal Representatives made a presentation on the outcome of discussions by the Personal Representatives on this issue. The Chairman summarized the Personal Representatives' discussions as follows:

- The Summit level nature of the Group should be maintained, the periodicity of the Summits should continue to be on an annual basis, the decision to have a 2/3rds quorum as a minimum requirement in the Summit should be maintained and the option of including the Retreat in the Programme for the Summit was to be left to the host country.

The consensus reached by the Personal Representatives was noted and discussed further in a comprehensive manner by the Foreign Ministers who also referred, in this context, to a meeting held with H. E. the Prime Minister of India, earlier in the day. The Chairman summarized the views expressed as follows:

- The Meeting endorsed the Personal Representatives' consensus that the annual Summits should continue, but some expressed the view that the Summit Meetings could be of a biennial nature. It was agreed that the question of periodicity would be considered at the postponed Summit in New Delhi.
- The decision regarding a 2/3rds quorum as a minimum requirement for the holding of Summit Meetings should be maintained.
- An effort could be made to streamline the procedural aspects of the Summit so that these meetings could be conducted over a shorter time. It was also noted that the decision to continue with the practice of a Retreat should be let to the host country.
- The Agenda for Summit Meetings should be of a substantive and compelling nature. It should focus on contemporary issue of economic, social and political concern to member countries and enable the Group to influence the evolution of these issues for common benefit.
- After due consultations, the date for the Summits should be fixed well in advance to ensure regular and well attended Summits.
- Since it may be unrealistic to envisage the holding of two Summits in 1994, it was suggested that the Buenos Aires Summit should be held in 1995. The exact month in which future Summits should be held could be considered and decided upon at the postponed New Delhi Summit.
- It was felt that the Foreign Ministers should have a more purposive role. They could contribute constructively, through their regular and inter Summit Meetings, to the development of a comprehensive yet compact Summit Agenda, in keeping with shorter Summits, and explore the possibilities of accelerating South-South Cooperation and establishing more constructive consultation with the G-7. It was also suggested that Ministers of Finance, Trade, etc., could also meeting for issue based consultations, as and when required.

The Foreign Minister of Zimbabwe, on behalf of his Government, made an offer to host the Sixth Summit, after Argentina. The Meeting welcomed the offer.

The Chairman of the 17th Meeting of Personal Representatives made a comprehensive presentation on the outcome of discussions by the Personal Representatives on the

evaluation and implementation of G-15 projects and referred to the Report of this meeting, which contained a detailed summary of the consensus reached on this subject. Emphasis was placed on the need to: a) streamline projects; b) maximize participation in the maximum number of projects and c) provide institutional and financial support to them.

Item 3. Technical Support Facility (TSF).

At the request of the Chairman, the delegation of India as Chairman of the Troika Permanent Representatives gave an overview on the location, status and financial situation of the TSF.

- Location.

The Meeting was informed that the TSF has been in Geneva since its inception and has been accorded a privilege status under the umbrella of the South Centre. At the Dakar Summit Meeting in 199, it was decided that the TSF shall continue to be located in Geneva. In this regard, the Swiss Authorities were approached early this year seeking an independent privileged status for the TSF. The request is still under examination.

- Finance.

The Meeting was informed that as the 17th Meeting, the Personal Representatives undertook a detailed review of the budget documentation presented by the TSF. It was noted with appreciation that against an approved expenditure of Sfr. 1.3 million in 1993, a saving of about Sfr. 400,000 was achieved. As for 1994, a somewhat higher expenditure of Sfr. 1.5 million is projected to cover the rentals of the premises and additional staff costs. However, the annual contribution pledged by each member country for 1994 has come down from this year's figure of US\$ 75,000, to US\$ 72,500.

As regards financial contributions, three countries have still not fully paid their initial contributions and six countries are still to pay their contributions for 1993. The Personal Representatives have underlined the importance of prompt payment of contributions due not only to maintain the economic viability of the TSF but as a symbol of commitment to G-15.

- The role of the TSF.

There was a general discussion by the Personal Representatives on the work expected of the TSF and its impact on staffing. Some felt that the TSF should not merely be servicing G-15 meetings as at present by should also be able to provide policy/research inputs. This would require strengthening of the professional staff. It was also felt that the appointment of a clearly designated Head/Coordinator at the TSF would improve its functional efficiency. Hence, a suggestion was made that the existing vacant post at P-3 level be replaced by a D-1 level official who could be designated as the Head. Others, however, expressed reservations on this suggestion. It was therefore decided that the issue will be examined in depth by the Troika Permanent Representatives in Geneva and re-submitted with a detailed proposal and an analytical note by the TSF on its current activities.

Item 4. Draft Joint Communiqué.

The Meeting was informed that, although the Summit has had to be postponed to March 1994, an attempt has been made to carry out substantive preparations for the Summit in as complete a sense possible. The Chairman of the 17th Meeting of Personal Representatives presented a brief, comprehensive overview of the structure and content of the Draft Joint Communiqué which had been negotiated in a Draft Committee and presented to and approved by the Meeting of Personal Representatives. It was however understood that the Draft will need to be updated and fine tuned taking into account developments nearer the March Summit. The text of the Draft Joint Communiqué was therefore, commended for the consideration and recommendation of the Foreign Ministers and it was agreed that elements of such an update would be conveyed to the TSF.

Item 5. Any other business.

The Meeting was informed that, as mandated, the Permanent Representatives have been meeting in New York and Geneva with a view to coordinating and harmonising positions on some specific areas of concern and interest. The details of these meetings and the outcome of these discussions were summarised in a document which was circulated at the meeting. Furthermore, some of the issues on which the Permanent Representatives focussed on were trade and development; human rights; the role of the UN, its restructuring and reorientation; sustainable development; Agenda for Development and the forthcoming International Conferences – on Population and Development; World Summit on Social Development; and World Conference on Women.

The Personal Representatives noted the outcome of these discussions with appreciation and recommended that the Permanent Representatives meet on a regular basis in New York and Geneva to coordinate on issues that are likely to come up at international for a.

The Personal Representatives felt that this would be most useful in harmonising their views on matters of common concern.

The Meeting thanked the Chairman for the successful conducting of the meeting.
