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ON THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS
IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

Mr Chairman,

Thank you for giving me the floor to participate in this dialogue. I am sure with your able stewardship we will arrive at a successful conclusion. Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate and thank the host, Cuba, for the excellent preparation and organisation of our meeting here today and the Summit which will begin tomorrow.

2. I would like to speak on the following issues - United Nations and Globalisation and some other general matters commented by other earlier speakers.

3. The United Nations has played a pivotal role in the promotion and protection of human rights in all its aspects. It is however in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security that the Organisation has a mixed record. On the one hand it has been able to prevent a major global war but on the other it has not been able to prevent regional conflicts or for that matter to resolve them; several of these conflicts have dragged on for decades.

4. On the larger issue of international peace and security, the Organisation will have to come to grips with the new phenomenon of intra-state conflicts which occur in many parts of the world, consistent with the principles and purposes of the UN Charter particularly with respect to the principles of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States.

5. It has to be proactive in the areas of conflict prevention in the context of preventive diplomacy.

6. To ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness, the United Nations of the new century will have to prepare itself for the many challenges that await it in the coming years and decades and to adjust to the new realities.

7. We agree that there is a need to reform the United Nations which must be comprehensive. It should not become an appendage of Bretton Woods Institutions and WTO on issues of development.

8. Reform must be comprehensive, both in expansion and working methods including the veto (permanent and non permanent).

9. The voting methods and procedures of the Security Council must have greater transparency. We would like to see the veto eliminated - or if not possible at least to limit the use of the veto for it to be fair and just to the majority members of the United Nations.

10. On globalisation - we are all agreed that this process is unstoppable, but what is relevant as G-77 members form more than two-thirds of the United Nations membership is to have a say in its formulation and interpretation. As developing countries we must work together to manage the globalisation process. The trading regime in the context of trade liberalisation should give greater flexibility to developing countries for a wide variety of options and responses to deal with the complexities of development and nation-building.

11. The United Nations should play a particularly active role in ensuring that globalisation and interdependence will not sideline but benefit the larger membership of the Organisation whether it is in the area of trade and investment or advancement of technology.

12. The United Nations should also play a supportive and catalytic role in integrating the economies of the developing economies into the world economy in order to ensure maximum benefits for the developing countries. Towards this end, the United Nations should foster greater coherence, complementarity and coordination in tackling economic and development issues at the global level.

13. For these purposes, it is imperative that the United Nations forges close cooperative relations with the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and other relevant international bodies so as to ensure that the consensual positions of Member States of the United Nations as well understood by these institutions.

14. International institutions must have mechanisms to allow the views of all to be heard. It must not only reflect the views of big businesses and big governments but those of the threatened small businesses and small governments as well.

15. There should be, Mr. Chairman, equitable access to information and knowledge on a global scale which is crucial to bring about true empowerment and good governance at the local, national, regional and global levels. We must bridge the widening gaps. It must be narrowed. Mr. Chairman, there is an urgent need to change the power structure to put an end to the marginalisation of the South in the decision making process of multilateral organisations.

16. I wish to add my voice of support to the point raised by the Foreign Minister of South Africa on the question of democracy. We agree that countries must not be forced to accept that there is only one form of democracy. We see there is a tendency to impose liberal democratic standards as perceived by the developed North. The advocates of these form of democracy always lack understanding of the social, cultural and religious values and other peculiarities that exist in a given country. As a result, it may bring about catastrophe rather than benefits to the people. We must bear in mind that democracy has different shades and colours. Countries of the South must be allowed to practice democracy based on its own culture and heritage.

17. Finally, I would like to support Qatar to host the 4th. WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha.

Thank you.