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Pakistan assumes the Chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China

United Nations, New York January 10, 2007: Speaking at the handover ceremony of the Chairmanship of the Group of 77 and China from South Africa to Pakistan, here today on January 10, 2007, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Makhdum Khusro Bakhtiar vowed that Pakistan would maintain the high standards of leadership and dedication as the Chair of the Group of 77 and China for 2007 and will be guided by the principle of transparency and inclusiveness and a deep commitment to the preservation and promotion of the Group unity.

Pakistan's assumption of the G-77 Chair for the unprecedented third time, the Minister noted, spoke volumes of the trust and confidence being reposed by the developing world in Pakistan's leadership in effectively protecting and promoting the interests of the developing countries in the UN system.

He said the Pakistan's election as member of the Security Council for 2002-2004, ECOSOC Presidency for 2005, G-77 Chairmanship in Geneva for 2006, G-77 Chairmanship in Rome for 2008 and the appointment of our Prime Minister as the co-chair of the High Level Panel on UN Reform is a living testament to the important and active role that Pakistan now plays in the international arena.

The handover ceremony was attended among others by the Foreign Minister of South Africa Dr. Nkosazana C. Dlamini Zuma, as the outgoing Chair, the UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, the Secretary General of UNCTAD Dr. Supachi Panitchpakdi and the Acting President of the General Assembly, Associate Administrator of UNDP and the Permanent Representatives of the G-77 member states.

Outlining a comprehensive plan of action for the G-77 and China, the Minister noted that the first priority for the Group of 77 and China must be to secure the full and timely implementation of the MDGs and IADGs and called for the establishment of an international mechanism to evaluate the implementation of the development commitments by the developed countries to provide financial transfers, trade openings and technology access to the developing

countries. This, he said, was critical to enable the developing countries to successfully implement their national development strategies.

The Minister pointed out that in many cases, the economic and trade policies of our partners worked at cross purposes to their development commitments. The impasse in the Doha Round of trade negotiations was a visible and vital case in point. The Doha Development Agenda, he said should not be held hostage to securing further trade and other concessions from the developing countries. The target must remain the removal of the unequal subsidies, high escalating and discriminatory tariffs, and other policies that perpetuate the systemic inequality of the multilateral trading system against the developing countries.

Another area where coordinated action by the Group of 77 and China was essential, the Minister noted was the process of UN and institutional reform which must be consistent with the UN Charter and uphold the principle of sovereignty equality of the member states.

The third aspect of the Group's endeavours, Minister stressed, should be to strengthen South-South Cooperation. The Group should actively exploit its existing and potential economic complementarities and intensify its efforts to expand, accelerate and institutionalize the emerging positive trends in the South. To enlarge trade and economic integration, the Group may consider reviving and reinvigorating the South's Trade and Commerce Organizations; promote greater interaction with the private sector; prepare a list of MDG-based R&D projects for financing; promote coordination between the South's development Funds and Programmes e.g. through a G-77 Development Assistance Committee; establish a mechanism for coordination among G-77 "Think Tanks" and development policy institutions. The Group may also consider setting up an Eminent Persons Group to further elaborate the "South Platform" formulated at the initiative of Jamaica, our Chair for 2005.

The Minister conveyed Pakistan's keen desire to work closely with the new Secretary-General and expressed the confidence that the Secretary General will be fully responsive to the interests, priorities and positions of the developing countries. He said that the Group was heartened and reassured by the personal commitment of the new Secretary-General to advancing the global development agenda and his expressed wish to work closely with the Group of 77 and China. The Group, the Minister noted, "would like to open a new chapter of close and active interaction and cooperation with the Secretary-General and his team in order to advance the noble principles and purposes of our Charter."

During the ceremony, the representatives of Nigeria, Algeria, Paraguay, Turkey, India, Singapore, Jamaica, Iran, Cameroon, Morocco, Indonesia, China, Thailand, Libya and Bangladesh appreciated the contributions and services of South Africa as outgoing Chair of the G-77 and congratulated Pakistan on the assumption of the Chairmanship of G-77 and China. They further reposed full confidence in the leadership of Pakistan and Ambassador Munir Akram to further the cause of G-77.

The Secretary General in his speech on the occasion said that he was fully committed to the cause of development and expressed the hope that G-77 and China with Pakistan at its helm in 2007, will effectively contribute to a better and stronger UN.