Mr. Chairman,
Under Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs,
Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Allow me to extend, on behalf of the Group, our warmest felicitations to you and the Bureau on your election to the 45th session of the Commission for Social Development. The G77 and China wish to assure you of their support and cooperation during the proceedings of this important session which will be conducted under the revised methods of work agreed through the ECOSOC resolution (2005/11) of 21 July 2005. We hope that deliberations of this review segment on the theme “Promoting full employment and decent work for all with their impact on poverty eradication and social integration” will provide a substantive input and guidelines for the next year’s policy segment on the same theme.

Mr. Chairman

2. One of the three pillars of the 1995 (Copenhagen) World Summit for Social Development was the commitment to promote the goal of full employment as a basic priority of economic and social policies, both at the national and international levels.

3. At the 2005 world summit, our leaders agreed to re-invigorate this commitment and resolved to make the goal of full and productive employment and decent work for all…, “a central objective of national and international policies and development strategies”.

4. The High Level Segment of the Economic and Social Council of 2006 further built on this commitment by adopting a Ministerial Declaration. This declaration, inter alia, reaffirmed to develop employment strategies aiming to promote full and productive employment, as well as decent work for all,
with full respect for fundamental principles and rights at work under conditions of equity, equality, security and dignity.

**Distinguished Delegates**

5. All individuals, regardless of age, sex, race ethnicity or disability, have the right to employment and decent work. There has been no greater challenge to humanity, nor greater threat to world peace, than the failure to realize the United Nations Charter’s vision of promoting better standards of life and larger freedoms. The close nexus between security and development, in this increasingly globalized world has clarified the conclusion that prosperity cannot be sustained for some while poverty afflicts the many. It is imperative to tackle poverty and development especially through employment generation.

6. The report of the Secretary General (E/CN.5/2007/2) presents a grim picture on the realization of commitments to eradicate poverty. It underlines that achievement of full employment and decent work remains a global concern. Despite the increase in total employment since the mid 1990s, the problems of unemployment and underemployment have worsened. The concept of decent work- the provision of a sufficient level of income, security, personal dignity and good working conditions- has yet to become a reality for more than a billion people and one third of the global work force.

7. We recognize that globalization and interdependence are opening new opportunities, through trade, investment and capital flows, as well as through advances in technology, for economic growth and improvement of living standards. However, there remain simultaneous and serious challenges, including serious financial crises, insecurity, poverty, exclusion and inequality, within and among societies that need to be addressed. Situations of foreign occupation, armed conflicts and instances of unilateral coercive measures, are persistently impeding the avenues for development and growth for large segments of populations in the developing world. The growing inequality within countries is another challenge to poverty eradication. More than two billion people, for instance, remain entrapped in poverty in low and middle income countries alone. Unless the benefits of social and economic development are extended to all countries in an equitable manner, a growing number of people in all countries and even entire regions will remain marginalized from the global economy.
8. There is an increasing recognition in the G77 and China that promotion of good governance, sound economic policies, solid democratic institutions and improved infrastructure, are the basis for sustained economic growth, poverty eradication and employment creation. We are aware that investing in human capital and effective delivery of basic social services and by targeted interventions and expanding social safety nets, are crucial to achieving the goal of poverty eradication.

9. The G77 and China believe that struggle to promote full employment, and decent work for all, transcends national frontiers. The achievement of full employment, as noted by the report, rests upon the promotion of an enabling overall macroeconomic environment based on the implementation of an integrated and coherent set of policies both at the national and international levels. It is imperative that macroeconomic policies must endeavour to incorporate employment creation as an integral component. Furthermore, it is also essential to eliminate asymmetries of globalization and its uneven costs and benefits. This requires adopting specific measures to incorporate the informal sector in social protection programmes, and establishing incentive structures that promote employment creation through directing investment to sectors that are productive and labour-intensive, with a special view to promoting small and medium size enterprises.

**Mr. Chairman**

10. The G77 and China would like to stress the following in the context of international cooperation for achievement of the MDGs and full employment:

i) Global rules and polices on trade and finance must allow more space for policy autonomy in developing countries to enable the development of policies and institutional arrangements best suited to the level of development and specific circumstances of the countries concerned.

ii) The policies of international organizations and donor countries must also shift more decisively away from external conditionalities to national ownership of policies.

iii) Negotiations in multilateral frameworks should particularly address the issues of agricultural trade, market access, reduction of trade
barriers and fluctuations in commodity prices and terms of trade for agricultural commodities.

iv) Availability of sustained financial resources through increased ODA and debt cancellation are crucial to enable developing countries to pursue active labour market policies particularly through public works programmes and financing of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

v) Fair rules for trade and capital flows need to be complemented by fair rules for the cross border movement of people. There is growing recognition that labor migration strategies, when formulated and implemented through collaborative approaches, become more effective and responsive to the exigencies of the situations in countries of origin and destination.

vi) Cooperation between countries of origin and destination on key labor migration decisions should be enhanced for exchange of information on the labor situation of countries and the creation of some degree of harmonization of labor policies among countries.

Mr. Chairman

11. The G77 and China welcome the continued focus on various social groups namely family, youth, ageing and persons with disability in the discussions of the Commission. We also welcome the recently adopted Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We believe that it will contribute in addressing some of the discriminatory policies towards the persons with disabilities and bringing them in the mainstream workforce.

12. Ageing is another issue of global concern. There is urgent need to enhance our efforts to integrate older persons into the mainstream of development policy and overcome barriers to hiring and retaining older workers. We hope that discussion during this session will contribute important input for the first global review and appraisal of the implementation of the Madrid International of Action on Ageing.

13. We are equally concerned about the global jobs crisis which has hit the young people the hardest. With more than one half of youth still struggling itself come out of poverty, the report of the Secretary General
suggests that frustration resulting from long term unemployment among youth could feed political and ideological unrest.

Mr. Chairman

14. The implementation of reforms in international economic and social policy to realize the goal ‘of full employment and decent work for all’ will require worldwide political support, the commitment of key global actors and strengthening of global institutions. This also inextricably linked to the realization of the MDGs and monitoring of development commitments agreed at international conferences and summits. We must ensure that the comparative advantage, universality, neutrality and convening power of the United Nations, and its family of organizations, is fully and effectively utilized in the service of economic prosperity and social progress for all “the peoples.” This is the vision, and the promise, of the Charter of the United Nations.

I thank you.