



Remarks by the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari at the Handing Over Ceremony of the Chair of G-77 and China (12 January 2023)

**Your Excellency
President Miguel Díaz-Canel of Cuba,**

**Your Excellency
President of the General Assembly, Mr. Csaba Körösi,**

**Your Excellency
Secretary-General, António Guterres,**

Your Excellency Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez Parilla of Cuba,

Excellencies,

Dear Colleagues,

It is my honour today to transfer the Chair of the Group of 77 and China to my dear friend, Foreign Minister H.E. Bruno Rodriguez Parilla of Cuba.

2. It has been a great honour and privilege for me and for Pakistan to preside over the Group in New York during the past year. I thank the 135 members of the Group for reposing their trust and confidence in Pakistan's Chairmanship in these challenging times.

3. I wish to thank the UN Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, the UNDP Administrator, Achim Steiner, Under Secretary General UN-DESA, Li Junhua, the UN Office of South-South Cooperation and the G-77 Secretariat for their support and assistance to Pakistan during its Chairmanship of the Group.

4. The Group of 77 and China is the largest group within the United Nations. It is a vital stakeholder in the international economic system. It is the principal engine propelling positive change in international economic relations to end poverty in all nations and promote greater equality and justice among them.

5. Pakistan has had the privilege to Chair of the Group of 77 and China three times in the past. However, leading the Group this year, as our nations collectively confronted the "perfect storm" of the multiple external shocks of Covid, climate and conflict, was especially challenging and, yet, rewarding. Our Group responded to the 'poly-crises' of food,

fuel and finance facing developing countries with collective vision, determination and unity.

6. The Group of 77 and China can be proud of its unified and collective response to the multiple and cascading crises. The Group has led the way in formulating and securing agreement on the urgent and systemic responses required to overcome these multiple challenges:

- At the Financing for Development Forum, in April, the Group secured an agreement on measures for financing recovery from the crises and achieving the SDGs;
- At the High-Level Political Forum, last July, the Group collectively negotiated the means of implementation for achieving the SDGs in the current difficult “decade of action”;
- At the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly, the Group was able to secure consensus for action on major economic, financial, development and environmental issues;
- At CoP-27, through our mutual and collective endeavours, the Group was able to achieve a historic decision for the establishment of the “loss and damage” fund; and
- At the Ministerial Conference of our Group last month, we agreed on an Outcome Document which sets out our positions on the immediate and structural measures that are essential to alleviate the food, fuel and financial crises confronting our countries and to reform the global economic architecture in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and implement Agenda 2030 and the Paris and other environmental agreements.

7. These demonstrations of the unity of the Group and its capacity for collective action are a clear signal that, acting together, we can achieve the decisions required to overcome the challenges to our development and prosperity which arise from external impacts and an unequal international economic system. To this end, the Group must maintain its unity, coordination and collective action. It must secure implementation of the positions the Group has set out in the Outcome Document adopted last month, including at the SDG Summit, at CoP28 and in the several other processes and meetings scheduled in 2023.

8. Some of the actions we have proposed need to be urgently implemented:

- Debt relief and restructuring for the 60 Members of our Group who are in debt “distress”;
- Rechanneling of unutilized SDRs to provide fiscal space and liquidity as needed by over 100 developing countries;
- Food supplies to the 250 million living in hunger;
- Generous financial and other assistance to the countries most vulnerable to climate change to enable them to rebuild from natural disasters and to adapt to the ever more frequent and more ferocious climate impacts.

9. Such action is all the more urgent and essential since the external economic environment could become even more hostile if the Central Banks of the major economies continue to raise interest rates; if great power rivalries further constrain trade and investment flows; and if the global economy falls into an extended recession.

Excellencies,

10. Pakistan is confident that the Group of 77 and China has the capacity to collectively confront and overcome the mounting external economic challenges and promote a more just and equitable international economic order. Our unity is, of course, our greatest asset. This was on full display at Cop 27. Moreover, unlike the past, today, the Group has significantly greater capacity for self-help, through the ever enlarging modality of South-South cooperation. Some of our Members are now the world’s leading economies and offer the model and the market for other developing countries. And, we have allies in the global North – those who agree with us that the historical approach of exploitative and unequal growth has damaged the global environment, exacerbated poverty, hunger and disease, and triggered conflicts across the world. We must continue to make common cause with such conscientious people, organizations and institutions.

11. I am confident that in 2023, under Cuba’s able leadership and the guidance of H.E. Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla and the Cuban delegation, the Group of 77 and China will respond actively and boldly to our

imposing challenges and grasp all available opportunities to advance our common objectives of achieving the SDGs and environmental goals. I wish Cuba every success in guiding the Group during the year towards the realization of our common aspiration for a just international economic, social, and environmental order.

12. Pakistan will extend its full cooperation in this endeavour and will continue to play an active and positive role as a member of the Group of 77 and China.

I thank you.