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United Nations
Office for South-South Cooperation

Draft Message of Mr. Samba Thiam
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60th Anniversary of the Group of 77 and China

PANEL DISCUSSION
60 years of Contribution of the Group of 77 and China
to Global South Coalition in International Development and Politics

25 October 2024
United Nations Headquarters, ECOSOC Chamber

H.E. Philémon Yang, President of the General Assembly;

H.E. Mr. Bagiire Vincent Waiswa, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

H.E. Mr. Adonia Ayebare, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Uganda to the United Nations and Chair of G-77 and China;

H.E. Ambassador E. Courtenay Rattray, Chef de Cabinet, representing the Secretary-General of the United Nations;

Mrs. Yuefen Li, Senior Advisor on South-South Cooperation and Development Finance, South Centre;

Prof. Adekeye Adebajo, Senior Researcher Fellow, Centre for the Advancement of Scholarship, University of Pretoria;

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to join you today, representing the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation Director, at this important moment in the history of the Group of 77.

First, allow me to commend H.E. Ambassador Adonia Ayebare, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda to the United Nations, and the Government of Uganda for organizing this gathering. I also recognize the Ambassador's successful leadership of the Group of 77 this past year and look forward to his continued guidance as we move toward 2025 and beyond.

Born 60 years ago in the struggles of its members for national independence, and against exploitation and oppression, the Group of 77 is the voice of the majority of the world population and its geographical location is home of a considerable share of the global natural resources, some of which play an important



role in climate change mitigation. Those include the Amazon Basin, the Congo Basin and the Mekong River basin. This part of planet also hosts nations that have emerged as some of the world's fastest-growing economies.

Ten years ago, UNDP's Human Development Report showcased *The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World*; and examined the profound shift in global dynamics driven by the fast-rising new powers of the developing world and its long-term implications. This is confirmed by economic facts as over the past 15 years, 35 low-income countries have transitioned to middle-income country status, reflecting the sustained economic growth achieved in most parts of the developing world.

As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the G77, being the largest single negotiating constituency in the UN, let us also acknowledge and cherish the longstanding partnership between the Group and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation on very strategic workstreams: Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund management; support to the Office Chair of G77; collaboration in the lead up to, and during certain Rio Conventions Conferences of Parties.

The Group of 77 has played a critical role, and advocated for the importance of the South-South cooperation modality within global discussions and Summits at the United Nations and beyond. The South-South cooperation modality therefore galvanized the political will of the Global South to get back on track to achieve the 2030 Agenda, Agenda 2063 of the African Union, and other internationally agreed development goals, through landmark declarations, resolutions and decisions adopted at various inter-governmental fora. These include, among others, the Twenty-first Session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation; the Summit on Science, Technology and Innovation of the Group of 77 and China, held in 2023; the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries; the Third South Summit; and the Fourth International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

With the strong policy engagement of the Group of 77, the Global South is reshaping the global development landscape – transforming trade, finance, investment, technology development, and the entire framework of development cooperation. This is a result of a long yet cumulative journey. Let me flag some: from UNTACD1 in Geneva in 1964; though the first ministerial conference in Algiers 1967; the UNGA 29 where the Group advocated for the UN Conference on TCDC which took place in 1978 in Buenos Aires; the establishment of the Peres Guerrero Trust Fund in 1985; the first South Summit in Havana in 2000; the second South Summit in Doha in 2005; the STI Summit in Havana in 2023; and the Third South Summit in Kampala in 2024.

The G77+China membership is also taking the lead in supporting Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States. This includes financial contributions to Trust Funds entrusted to the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, such as the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund, UN Fund for South-South Cooperation, and the IBSA Fund. Important to note that is that the PGTF, entirely funded by the G77 Member States, has supported 384 innovative initiatives across 141 developing countries.

By end of 2023 the UNOSSC Trust funds reached 4.9 million direct beneficiaries across 45 Least Developed Countries, 28 Landlocked Developing Countries, 36 Small Island Developing States and 37 fragile countries.

Excellences;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As the world becomes more interconnected, it's clear that we need to work together to tackle the issues we all face. Whether it's climate change, debt distress, biodiversity loss, youth unemployment, security threats, or economic instability.

The UNDP 2024 Trends report shows that “Conflicts are proliferating and intensifying, Geopolitical tensions beginning to weaken global trade and economic integration; Debt servicing is crowding out health and education while hampering the green transition.” The report also reveals signs of hope. For instance, developing countries are asserting themselves, with “a la carte” coalitions and ad hoc alignment’; there are growing digital health solutions, and nature-positive commitments are increasing. Momentum is increasing around digital public infrastructure. Addressing the above-mentioned challenges, or amplifying the positive signs that this report underlined, call for international cooperation. Here again the G77+China is paving the way in many fronts.

As the UN Secretary-General’s 2024 report on the State of South-South Cooperation states, “Developing countries are assuming leadership roles in global economic governance and are now hosting and chairing annual agenda setting meetings of the Group of 20 [e.g. India (2022), Indonesia (2023), Brazil (2024) and South Africa (2025)]. Such leadership provides developing countries with the opportunity to play a pivotal role in South-South cooperation, to better voice the interests of the Global South, and address extreme poverty by 2030. It also enables them to strengthen human solidarity to address poly-crises faced by vulnerable countries, including SIDS, LDCs, LLDCs and MICs.

This year is critical as we begin to intensify our efforts to meet the challenging commitments of the Pact for the Future. Year 2025 will be even be more critical with the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development, the Oceans Governance Summit, the Twenty-second Session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation, and the World Social Development Summit lining up.

To this end, the UNOSSC will – within its mandate – continue to further strengthen its partnership with the G77 through intergovernmental processes facilitation and reporting; capacity development; knowledge co-creation and management; and South-south and triangular cooperation solutions labs.

As the United Nations system-wide coordinator of South-South cooperation. We look forward to, and stand ready to, continue supporting the Group of 77 in:

- Championing the South-South agenda, by bringing to bear our knowledge management platforms, research networks, and the Inter-Agency Mechanism for South-South and Triangular Cooperation, among others
- Strengthening its coordination, management and operational mechanisms in line with outcomes of the Havana Summit on STI and Third South Summit; the Pact for the Future and other internationally concluded agreements.
- Positioning the financing of South-South cooperation on a more predictable basis, including through contributions to the important South-South Trust Funds the Group of 77 membership has entrusted UNOSSC to manage on its behalf.

On behalf of the United Nations for South-South Cooperation, I, once again, congratulate you all for this important step in the history of your respective nations. Thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to working with all of you as we prepare for upcoming international fora, including the 22nd Session of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation in 2025.

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