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Statement by Ambassador Cesar Mayoral, Permanent Representative of Argentina to the United Nations ON BEHALF OF THE RIO GROUP

Mr. President,

It is an honor for me to make this statement on behalf of the Rio Group member states, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, México, Nicaragua, Panamá, Paraguay, Perú, Uruguay y Venezuela.

The Rio Group thanks the President of the General Assembly for the draft of the final document of the 2005 Summit that he circulated and would like to express the views of our countries on those aspects of the document that have to do with development , in line with the position that was expressed by the letter that the Rio Group sent the President of the General Assembly on development issues, as well as on subjects related to disarmament.

In our opinion Section II of the project on development is, in general lines, an appropriate foundation for our deliberations. Within this constructive spirit we would like to formulate the following remarks:

The third bullet of Paragraph 13 seems to suggest again that the behavior of developed countries in the round of Doha of WTO is linked to national efforts of governance in the developing world and not to the dynamism itself of commercial negotiations. We understand that a new drafting is needed in order to clearly show that it is the dynamics of trade negotiations at the Doha Round of WTO the one determining the positioning of developed countries, and that such behavior is not linked to national governance efforts in developing countries. That is why we request that the reference to the development focus of the Doha Round be eliminated from this third bullet.

At the same time we suggest that this paragraph should contain a new bullet that reflects the enormous potential, advantages and opportunities that South-South cooperation presents a type of cooperation which is always complementary to that of North-South.

The socioeconomic reality of member states of the Rio Group, most of them middle income countries, is hiding great inequalities in terms of wealth distribution, which are the cause of high figures of social exclusion. According to the ECLAC's Social Review for Latin American 2002-2003, 44% of latin-americans are poor and 19,4% out of them lives in extreme poverty, with less than a dollar a day.

That is why we urge developed countries and international organizations to strengthen their cooperation with middle income countries, as a complement to national efforts to achieve a better distribution of wealth. All of this with the goal of mobilizing additional resources to support social public policies aimed at the most needed sectors, as well as to reinforcing governance and reduce internal disparities, achieving the MDGs and eradicating poverty.

The section regarding Financing development (paragraphs 14 and 16) seems adequate to us in general terms.

The Rio Group acknowledges the special needs of less developed countries, of developing countries without littoral and of the developing small island states that need better cooperation by

the international community and support the efforts that may be given to impulse their development.

The Rio Group countries support the reference of the project regarding the necessity to reduce the debt of several middle income countries who are highly indebted. However we request that the redaction of bullet 5 of Paragraph 14 be modified because it constitutes an unnecessary conditionality for the effective execution of the new debt sustainability framework, and we point out that in no case cooperation with the above mentioned countries will damage the financial viability of financial institutions on the long run, nor will it reduce the availability of resources for other developing countries if, as it is hoped for, the raise of official assistance for development will be fulfilled to reach the objective of 0,7%.

The countries of our Group, in different grades, continue to require timely and effective international cooperation, mainly in order to face and resolve grave poverty and marginality problems, particularly in the rural sector for the full exercise of women's rights, improvement of the capacity for environment management which would correct the degradation processes that derive from poverty, and the strengthening and diversification of their productive structures for an equitable participation in the progress of the trade liberalization and integration processes, in order to face with more strength sudden financial crisis and changes in the international prizes.

In relation to bullet 6 of paragraph 14 we understand it should contain the commitment to conclude successfully the Doha Round in a manner consistent with the development needs and the priorities of developing countries, bearing in mind that the development dimension of Doha Programme of Work includes enhancing market access for goods and services of developing countries products to the markets of developed countries, special and differentiated treatment for developing countries, balanced rules and well targeted and sustainable financed technical assistance.

We understand that the call in bullet 7 of paragraph 14 regarding the provision of duty-free and quota-free market access for all products from the least developed countries should be corrected to a wording especially addressed to developed countries such as it was agreed in Paragraph 15 of the Millennium Declaration.

Sustainable development of indigenous people is fundamental in our fight against hunger and poverty and therefore we suggest that in Paragr. 14 a new bullet be introduced which would reaffirm the vital role that indigenous people play in the development and that support be decided for the formulation of policies and measures to improve the access of indigenous people and their communities to economic activities and the increase of their employment rate by the adoption of measures that foment capacity building, technical assistance and credit.

Mr. President,

It seems appropriate for us that the document includes Paragraph 17 regarding the importance of productive employment and decent work. It seems to us that this mentioning should be enriched by a reference to the social impact of employment and another sentence should be added with especial reference to the necessity to adopt measures to address the problems of forced labor and child exploitation.

The recommendations on environment sustainability contained in Paragraph 18 in general seem appropriate to us. We understand that in Paragraph 18 another bullet should be added regarding the necessity to accelerate efforts for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all kinds of forests, including the full implementation of commitments contained in internationally agreed instruments on the issue, and keeping fully in mind the connection between the forest sector and other sectors.

At the same time we consider that in the wording of Paragraph 18 an additional bullet should be added regarding the adoption of measures towards the recognition that traditional and direct dependence of renewable resources and ecosystems, including their sustainable use, continues to be essential for the cultural, economic and physical well being of indigenous populations and their communities.

Regarding the subjects of health and HIV/AIDS, we consider that treatment, attention, support and prevention of this disease are integrated elements. Social, economical, political and cultural barriers limit the access of the poorest to treatment, attention and support to combat HIV/AIDS, depriving the most vulnerable of the access the health supplies in at reasonable prices. In order for this integrated effort to be sustainable in the long term, important investment in education and awareness raising are requested.

To reach gender equality and the empowerment of women are indispensable elements to reach the development goals. The Rio Group supports the proposals contained in Paragraphs 20 and 21 relating to the increase of the access of women to education, property, the labor market and the increase of the participation of women in all levels of decision making and of the life of their communities, as for example the prevention, solution and post conflict reconstruction, just as is affirmed in Paragraph 37.

Regarding science and technology for development, we understand that it would be convenient that the first bullet in Paragraph 22, after the word agriculture, would include a reference to forestry, among those areas that are relevant to the eradication of poverty.

The Rio Group fully supports the inclusion in the draft of the issue of migrations. Nevertheless paragraph 23 of the draft refers almost exclusively to measures related to the management of migrations, which is a partial perspective unable to constitute a basis for the consideration of the issue.

Following the same approach, the success of the High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development foreseen for 2006 cannot be reduced to the identification of measures for the effective and equitable management of migrations. There is a need to take into account that the goal of the high level dialogue is to discuss the multidimensional aspects of international migrations and development in order to determine the adequate means to maximize the benefits in the development field and minimize the negative effects. Therefore any reference to the dialogue should avoid prejudging its outcome and be consistent with the broad objectives of the dialogue.

Finally the draft should concentrate on international migrations and not address the issue of internal migrations, since both are events that require a differentiated attention and in different levels, thus calling for a separate treatment. In this context the reference to Habitat and Cities without Slums does not seem adequate.

Within our constructive reaction to the draft, the Rio Group countries would like to request that within Section II, regarding development, a specific paragraph be introduced related to education which would build upon and reaffirm what was agreed in Paragraph 19 of the Millennium Declaration. The mentioned goal should be more ambitious because in some regions the fact that someone completed their basic studies is no guarantee for defeating poverty.

We find it appropriate that the Report appreciates, in Paragraph 76, the support of different initiatives on the dialogue among cultures and civilizations and the promotion of a culture of peace. We deem it necessary that such culture of peace takes into account the principles of respect to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States and non interference in domestic affairs.

Mr. President,

Regarding the institutional aspects that affect the development issues, we share the idea of strengthening the ECOSOC, taking into account the functions assigned by the Charter, and on the basis of the current structures of Segments. An additional bullet should be added to Paragraph 86 on the function of ECOSOC to provide, on a regular basis, orientation and guidelines to the United Nations system regarding humanitarian issues.

Mr. President,

The Rio Group countries have actively contributed to the progress in disarmament and non-proliferation as well as in technological development with peaceful goals. However, they see it with concern that there is a lack of implementation of multilateral frameworks to address the threats regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction. In this sense, they point out the feeble respect of States possessing nuclear arms for the international commitment to disarm, especially the lack of application of Article VI of the Non Proliferation Treaty regarding the total elimination of these weapons. We regret the failure of the NPT review conference.

For this reason, the Rio Group supports paragraphs 48, 49 and 50 of the project which calls for all States to pursue and intensify negotiations in order to advance towards general and full disarmament and the strengthening of the international regimen of non proliferation. In this spirit, we reiterate the necessity to make agreements that consecrate irreversible measures of the dismantling nuclear weapons, reaffirm negative security assurances, ban the production of fissionable material, as well as to the ratification of the CTBT, while keeping during the interim the moratorium of those nuclear tests.

On the other hand, the Rio Group reaffirms the inalienable right of States to the peaceful development and use of nuclear energy, in conformity to the rules of International Law.

To conclude, Mr. President, the Rio Group would like to express its readiness to work in a constructive manner during the negotiations starting today, which we are sure are going to maintain the transparency and participatory spirit that the consultations under this process has had.