

25th Anniversary of the Group of 77 Vienna Chapter (31 May 2023)

Remarks by Ambassador Aftab Ahmad Khokher, Chairperson 2023

Excellencies,

Distinguished colleagues,

We are gathered here today to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of the Vienna Chapter of the Group of 77. This month the G-77 completed 25 years of its robust and fruitful presence in Vienna.

It is a great honour for me personally and a matter of immense pride for my country, as noted by the honourable Foreign Minister of Pakistan in his video message, to be serving as the Chair of the Vienna Chapter in this landmark year.

Excellencies and colleagues,

This is indeed an historic occasion. Founding of the G-77 Vienna Chapter in 1998 was an important milestone in institutionalizing the presence of the G-77 countries' Permanent Missions accredited to the Vienna-based organizations. With the setting up of the permanent liaison office of the Vienna Chapter, G-77 in Vienna was brought at par with other chapters in New York, Geneva, Rome, Paris and Nairobi. It was also an acknowledgement of the G-77 countries' strong interest in the vital importance of the work of the Vienna-based organizations.

On behalf of the Group, I would like to thank the Executive Heads of all the Vienna-based organizations and their representatives. Excellencies, your presence here today signifies your strong support to the Group and its objectives. The Group's special thanks are due to UNIDO for its support to the "one-woman" Secretariat of the Vienna Chapter since the very inception. We hope that the other Vienna-based BOs will also contribute in innovative ways towards further strengthening the Office of the G-77 Vienna Chapter.

I would also like to gratefully acknowledge the presence of the Group's external partners, including the Permanent Missions and other regional groups, at today's event. Our perspectives may sometimes diverge but we all share the overarching objective that Vienna-based organizations deliver on their respective mandates and effectively serve the international community.

Over 25 years of its existence, the Vienna Chapter has admirably served as a platform for developing countries to articulate their shared concerns and pursue

their common goals at the Vienna-based organizations. The Group's diversity is its strength; and its unity and solidarity springs from the shared historical experiences and future aspirations of its members.

As we celebrate the Vienna Chapter's successes over the last 25 years, we must also reflect on the continued challenges that beset our journey ahead. Many of those challenges – poverty and underdevelopment, food and energy insecurity, drug abuse and organized crime, climate change and conflict; and the migration crises they trigger – not only persist but are intensifying. In order to effectively surmount these challenges, we will need to build on the work of our predecessors across the Vienna-based organizations while relying on the same spirit of consensus and solidarity that has served us well over the years. I am confident that in this continued endeavour, the Group can count on the support of all its members as well as its partners who are represented here today.

Before concluding, I would like to thank H.E. Ms. Nozipho J. Mxakato-Diseko, Ambassador at Large for Peace and Security of South Africa, who will be joining us virtually from Pretoria. As its first chairperson, Ambassador Diseko got the G-77 Vienna Chapter up and running and established a great basis for us to build on in the following years. Our thanks are due to her for her dedicated and crucial work in those early days of the Vienna Chapter's creation.

It would be remiss of me if I did not specially acknowledge the presence among us of Ms. Annemarie Heuls, who was present at the creation of the G-77 Vienna Chapter in 1998 and served it with admirable dedication over the next two decades and a half before retiring last year. The Group remains grateful to her.

In the end, I would like to reaffirm Pakistan's commitment to the G-77; we will continue to contribute towards the Group's objectives.

I thank you all.