STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY AMBASSADOR ABDALMAHMOOD ABDALHALEEM MOHAMAD, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE INFORMAL MEETING OF THE PLENARY OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO HEAR A BRIEFING BY THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE OUTCOME OF THE UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE (New York, 21 December 2009)

Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

The Group of 77 and China thanks the Secretary-General for convening this meeting so soon after Copenhagen. The truth is that those of us who went are still recovering not just physically but also psychologically.

The Conference was supposed to be one of the most important meetings even held by the UN or by mankind in history. Its topic is a most serious one, how to save the world and humankind from climate change.

Unfortunately, the results were far below what we expected. The developing countries are not responsible for most of the emissions accumulated in the atmosphere but we will be most affected by climate change, so we have the most to lose. We thus took Copenhagen and its preparations very seriously. We worked very hard in the two working groups on long-term cooperation and on Kyoto Protocol. These two groups were the main venues where most of the work went on in Copenhagen, and our delegates worked sometimes till 5.00 a.m. to try to draft compromise texts.

From the beginning of the Conference, the G77 and China and our individual countries sought an assurance that there would not be any surprises in the form of a text dropped from the Presidency or worked out by a small group of Parties, as this would be untransparent and undemocratic, and against the principles and practices of the UN. At the opening session itself on 8 December, we stated that no parallel tracks of negotiations should be created.

We were given this assurance. Even when the second week began we were assured by the Presidency of the Conference that the real work was being done in the two working groups and their subsidiary drafting groups. Unfortunately some of the key issues being negotiated were then removed from some of the key drafting groups, for example on shared vision. The issues were transferred to somewhere else but we did not know to where.

Then in the early hours of 19 December, after the Conference was supposed to have ended on 18 December, the Conference of Parties was finally convened and we were informed for the first time by the Presidency that a small representative group of leaders had come up with the Copenhagen Accord, and that the COP was invited to look at it and adopt it.

This way of running a UN conference is unhealthy, to say the least, what more a meeting of a treaty-based organization like the UNFCCC, which is charged with preventing the most dangerous threat the world has known.

It was said that the 26 countries were a representative set of countries. But who is representative of who has to be decided by the whole body. It is not the prerogative of the host country to select who it thinks can represent the world.

Before the vast majority of delegations were informed even about the small meeting, some leaders of powerful countries were already informing the media that an agreement had been reached.

It was only hours later than a Copenhagen Accord was shown to the COP members with a request we study it and join the consensus.

There was an easy assumption that the COP of 192 nations would simply rubber stamp a document hastily put together by 26 countries. We are disappointed that this way of conducting business was done. It disrespects the hard work put in by thousands of delegates in the open-ended working groups that were discussing these issues in a transparent and democratic way. It is disrespectful of the United Nations and its member states.

Of course, having the participation of all Parties consumes time. But this is what works in the end. On such a crucial issue like climate change on which the lives of the people in each country depends, the decision-making process must be democratic and participatory. If indeed a smaller group is negotiate on behalf of all, then this decision has to be taken by all, the mandate and terms of reference must be agreed to by all, and the choice of countries must be made by all.

This is the most important lesson to draw from Copenhagen. We now know what happened when the Copenhagen Accord was given over to the COP. Because of the inappropriate process and the lack of time to seriously consider the contents, it was not possible to adopt the Accord. The Parties decided to "take note" of the Copenhagen Accord. The meaning of the term "takes note" may not be well known to the media or the public but in the UN context it is known to us. It is a neutral term that means the document is not adopted, nor is it viewed either positively or negatively. Each member can have its own opinion on it.

Although the Copenhagen Accord is not a document agreed to by consensus, I am sure that each of us will study it thoroughly now that we have more time, and each of the Members can draw lessons from it and key points from it and they have the opportunity to feed these points into the negotiations next year in the two working groups. The points in the Accord can thus provide contributions and inputs into the negotiations.

It should not be misunderstood that the G77 and China or our members have over- prioritizing process over substance. In this case, our concern about process is also primarily a concern on substance. We do not want texts of substance that we have worked on together with our partners in Annex I countries in the working groups to be superseded or deleted by texts of substance coming from a select group.

It must be recorded that the Copenhagen Conference was not only or mainly about the 26-country meeting or the Accord. It mainly consisted of the work in the AWG-LCA and the AWG-KP. We are glad to note that there was some progress in various issues in the AWG-LCA, with the text advancing in several areas. Of course, there are still many options and square brackets in the various texts. This is to be expected since it was known that Copenhagen would not reach a full agreement.

We are much more disappointed that the work on the Kyoto Protocol was much slower and that up to now we do not have the numbers for emission reduction commitments for Annex I parties in aggregate or as individual countries. This is the biggest substantive failure in Copenhagen, that these most vital figures of all are still missing. They are missing in the report of the AWG-KP. They are also missing in the Copenhagen Accord. Thus the developed countries did not take the lead as they promised in Copenhagen. We believe that obtaining adequate numbers in line with what science demands is still our most important task.

Mr. Secretary General,
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We are most disappointed that the comprehensive deal was not sealed in Copenhagen. But we must also remember that in the last two years we have made good progress in defining the issues, in defining our different positions, and in clarifying the methodologies and narrowing the options. There is a good foundation to base our work for the future. The G77 and China believes that there is no substitute for all of us, big or small countries, to work hard through the participatory and open-ended channels of the AWG-LCA and the AWG-KP to advance our work, in line with the mandates of the working groups and in accordance with the principles and provisions of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol.
We know that we now have a new deadline to complete the work by December 2010 in time for or at the COP 16.

We therefore propose the following:

- The work should progress along the two tracks as mandated in Bali.
- There should be an assurance as soon as possible from Annex I parties in the Kyoto protocol that they intend to remain in the Protocol and undertake a 2nd commitment period beginning in 2013.
- Top priority must be given to agreeing on the figures for Annex I emission reduction in the 2nd commitment period.
- The figures must be credible. Many developing countries have proposed that the aggregate figure is more than a 40% cut by 2020 compared to 1990.
- Annex I members who are not a Party in the Kyoto Protocol should undertake a comparable effort inside the Convention through the AWG-LCA track.
- Developing countries will undertake nationally appropriate mitigation actions which are supported and enabled by finance and technology and a method of measuring, reporting and verifying is to be worked out for the supported NAMAs and the financing and technology transfer.
- The new and more effective structures for finance and technology transfer, both of which should be under the authority of the COP, should be established. The quantum and sources and uses of funds and the critical issues in technology are to be worked out.
- In adaptation, a strengthened mechanism to give this issue the highest status it deserves, and the provision of adequate financing, must also be worked out.

These are some of the key issues that we have to and we can succeed in finalizing in the next 12 months.

Indeed we should give ourselves a stricter deadline. We should finish in a comfortable period before December 2010, so that we can have a much more predictable and smooth Conference in Mexico, with the decisions already agreed to before the Conference itself, and thus we can avoid the problems and tensions that we had in Copenhagen.

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The G77 and China are very committed to the multilateral process and especially to the UNFCCC which we consider the only legitimate body in which the international decisions can be taken on climate change policies. We understand that it may take a little bit more time and effort to forge a consensus among so many members of the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol, and often the differences of views makes it more complicated for the issues to be resolved.

Nevertheless we believe it is vital to invest in this truly bottom up and democratic process because the issues are so important and affect all countries, and moreover the best guarantee of an enduring and sustainable implementation of what is agreed is that we all have ownership of the decision-making process and of the decisions.

Like all our partners, the G77 and China is disappointed that we did not achieve more in Copenhagen. However we believe we did make significant progress in Copenhagen and we are committed to working even harder in the next year to come to final conclusions on both the Convention track and the Kyoto Protocol track.

Climate change and its effects continue to threaten us and we must all make the utmost effort to close the remaining gaps between us and to conclude a comprehensive deal that is both environmentally ambitious and that is just and fair and balanced.

Thank you.