



**Statement
on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group**

by

**H.E. Dr. Nawaf Salam
Permanent Representative of Lebanon
to the United Nations**

**at the
G77 Ceremonial Meeting
to mark the formal handover of the Chairmanship of the Group of 77
from the Kingdom of Thailand to the Republic of Ecuador**

New York, January 13, 2017

Check Against Delivery

*Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations
866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 531, New York, NY. 10017*

H.E. Mr. Rafael Correa, President of the Republic of Ecuador,

H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand,

H.E. Mr. Guillaume Long, Minister of Foreign Affairs & Human Mobility of the Republic of Ecuador,

H.E. Mr. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations,

H.E. Mr. Durga Prasad Bhattarai, Vice President of the General Assembly,

At the outset, I would like to acknowledge, on behalf of the members of the Asia Pacific Group, the outstanding efforts undertaken by the Kingdom of Thailand, a cherished member of our Group, during its Chairmanship of the Group of 77 for the year 2016. In particular, we would like to express our deep appreciation for the tireless devotion, dedication and patience that the Permanent Representative of Thailand H.E. Ambassador Virachai Plasai, along with his team, have shown during a very challenging year on the sustainable development calendar of the United Nations.

This past year has witnessed the holding of the first High Level Political Forum following the adoption of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the first ever Financing for Development (FFD) Forum and Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science Technology and Innovation (STI), in addition to the adoption, by consensus, of the new QCPR resolution, following a long and arduous negotiation process. The diplomatic skills of the Thai Mission's team were crucial in leading G77 to successfully negotiate 10's of resolutions in the different committees of the General Assembly this past year.

We would also like to express our appreciation for a job well done by the Executive Secretary of G77 Mr. Mourad Ahmia, and his excellent team, whose support for the work of the Chairmanship, and of G77 as a whole, is indispensable for the Group's success.

Mr. President,

We also take this opportunity to congratulate the Republic of Ecuador on its assumption, for the first time, of the Chairmanship of G77. Your Excellency's distinguished presence in person among us today, is a testament to the seriousness and dedication with which Ecuador will be approaching its tenure at the head of G77 in the upcoming year.

We have full confidence in the leadership that you will be providing, which we all witnessed at full display during Ecuador's hosting of the Habitat III Conference in Quito last October, on which you personally presided, and ensured its outstanding success.

In this regard, we will be looking forward to working with our colleague and friend H.E. Ambassador Horacio Sevilla Borja, and his able team, as they lead G77 in New York this year. Ambassador Borja, rest assured of our full confidence in your stewardship and of our support as you fulfill the G77 presidency tasks in the year ahead.

Thank you.