



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. MR. PETER THOMSON, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FIJI TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIR OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE 53RD MEETING OF ECOSOC ON THE ADOPTION OF THE MINISTERIAL DECLARATION OF THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT (New York, 16 December 2013)**

Mr. President,

1. The Group of 77 and China wishes to commend you on the manner in which you have been conducting the affairs of the Economic and Social Council, in particular the High-level Segment session. Your outstanding leadership, your determination to achieve progress, and your tireless efforts in guiding the negotiations on the Ministerial Declaration were instrumental for its adoption today and we thank you for that.

2. We are very pleased that it has been possible to reach an agreement on the contents of the Ministerial Declaration. We wish to acknowledge the contribution and hard work of all delegations in this process, especially the personal intervention of a few heads of delegation and ambassadors, which illustrated our common desire to secure a mutually acceptable Ministerial Declaration. The process has been protracted but the adoption of a consensual text today clearly demonstrates our solidarity and the collective commitment of this body towards the fundamental principles of the UN Charter.

3. The Group of 77 and China strongly supports paragraph 32 of last year's Ministerial Declaration that stressed the need to remove the obstacles to the full realisation of the right of self-determination of peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation, which adversely affect their economic and social development. We share your comment, Mr. President, that "all rights" mentioned in OP 9 of this year's Ministerial Declaration clearly include the right to self-determination, which is a fundamental principle of the UN Charter.

Mr. President,

4. This year's Ministerial Declaration is a significant document, especially in light of the importance of science, technology, innovation and culture as enablers and drivers for promoting sustainable development and achieving the MDGs.

5. By focusing on the theme of this year's Annual Ministerial Review, we are hopeful that the UN system will create an enabling environment for STI and culture to flourish at the national, regional and international levels. An enabling environment for STI and culture is important at this critical juncture of enhancing the UN's role as the appropriate forum to discuss current, emerging and new global development issues and challenges from a broad development perspective. Such discussions should draw on a range of innovations from science, technology and culture in the public and private sectors in order to ensure that the benefits of advances in science and technology are broadly shared, particularly in developing countries.

Mr. President,

6. The Group of 77 and China wishes to extend its appreciation to Ms. Marcela Ordonez of

Colombia for her skill and dedication in facilitating the process. We also commend the efforts and sacrifice of all the experts who have contributed to the creation of this Ministerial Declaration, for their long hours of negotiations, both in New York and Geneva. Finally, we wish to acknowledge and thank the secretariat for its untiring support.

I thank you, Mr. President.