



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E DR. GHADA WALY, MINISTER OF SOCIAL SOLIDARITY OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT, AT THE OPENING SEGMENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGH-LEVEL THEMATIC DEBATE ON ADDRESSING INEQUALITY TOWARD INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT (New York, 14 May 2019)

Madame President and Excellences,

1- I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of Group of 77 and China at this important General Assembly High-level thematic debate on "Addressing Inequality toward Inclusive Development." We are honored to have been asked by the current Chair of the G-77, the State of Palestine, to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group, as their Minister was unable to travel.

2- At the outset, the Group of 77 and China would like to take this opportunity to express appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for convening this high-level meeting in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 72/141 and 73/141 on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session. In particular resolution 73/141 stated that the General Assembly looked forward to "the convening by the President of the General Assembly of the high-level thematic debate on the issue of inclusive development and inequality within and among countries before the meeting of the high-level political forum in 2019." Moreover, we appreciate the President of the General Assembly's continued commitment to placing the reduction of inequality at the center of our collective efforts to realize the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development.

3- Before continuing, the Group recalls the high-level interactive dialogue by the G77 and China, chaired by State of Palestine, on "Inclusive development and inequality within and among countries" which coincided with the 57th session of the Commission for Social Development. The purpose of that meeting was to discuss how to overcome inequality in all its manifestations, as this is undeniably essential to achieve the SDG's. The Group appreciated the valuable contribution by the office of the President of the General Assembly during that dialogue.

Madame President and Excellences,

4- The Group attaches the utmost importance to tackling the challenges of inequality. Here, we wish to reaffirm that addressing inequality in all its forms is essential to eradicating poverty, advancing social progress and ensuring sustainable development. We believe it is also critical to promote social cohesion so as to create an environment for development and sustain peace.

5- The Group recalls that it strongly advocated for placing the reduction of inequality at the center of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Out of the 17 goals, eleven goals do address various forms of inequality, including gender inequality, and social exclusion, while SDG 10 explicitly calls for reducing inequality between and within countries. SDG 10 notably urges to make outcomes of global financial trade accessible, and migration politics more equal and inclusive. In this regard, we look forward to our discussions here today which will surely contribute to the relevant review at the HLPF in the coming months.

Madame President and Excellences,

6- The G77 and China remains deeply concerned that more than 24 years after the adoption of the World Summit for Social Development and Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, trends of inequality remain worrisome. Progress has been slow and uneven, and major gaps remain. In fact, many United Nations reports reflect that income inequality has persisted or even increased within many countries, undermining efforts to eradicate poverty and remove obstacles where all people can equally participate in and share the benefits of economic development in a sustainable manner.

7- This is in addition to the fact that four years since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, the Secretary General's report of 2018 on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development confronts us with dire realities and prospects. The report concluded that "by 2030...three quarters of children living in the poorest households in their country are expected to miss the [SDG] target for under-5 mortality rates, compared with only a quarter of children living in the richest households. Moreover, the Group believes it should not be acceptable that richest 10 percent have up to 40 percent of global income whereas the poorest 10 percent earn 2-7 percent only.

8- In this connection, the Group of 77 and China strongly believes that the call contained in the 2030 Agenda to reduce inequality within and between countries, as well as promoting inclusive, just and equitable societies is critical to empower people, in particular the most vulnerable. The Group recalls that in adopting the 2030 Agenda, with the pledge to "leave no one behind", we reaffirmed that tackling inequality is vital to all of our efforts to build sustainable, prosperous and peaceful societies and thus we committed to ensuring that the goals and targets were met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society, reaching those furthest behind first.

9- Taking this into account, the Group stresses that these widening disparities require sound policies and global solutions. Such policies should strive to empower all social groups, including children, youth, women, informal workers, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees and people living with HIV/AIDS, especially in vulnerable situations, as beneficiaries and agents of change in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs.

10- Furthermore, in order to achieve these objectives, all efforts should be geared towards the creation of an inclusive environment that ensures equal access to the labor market, quality, education, health, care services, and decent employment for all, free from all forms of discrimination.

Madame President and Excellences,

11- The rise in inequality is clearly impacting all of us and threatening our future in multiple ways. Our debate today is an unprecedented opportunity to further share our different experiences, learn from each other and most importantly try to reach a consensus on priorities for action at all levels.

12- Having addressed the above, the Group acknowledges there is no "one size fits-all approach". The Group notes that national capacities, including institutional and financial capacities, to fight inequality also differ. We would like to reiterate our commitment to continue to take concrete measures to overcome the complex challenges towards inclusive development, equality and eradication of poverty.

13- Again, we would like to thank you, Madame President, for your efforts, and assure you of the Group of 77 and China's commitment to working with you in tackling inequality and working to make inclusive development for all not just a vision but a reality.

Thank you for your attention.

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