



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ABDULLAH M. ALSAIDI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN TO THE UNITED NATIONS, CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE FIRST PREPARATORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE UN CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, ON A GREEN ECONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ERADICATION (New York, 18 May 2010)

Distinguished delegates and representatives,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. There is not, at this moment, a clear and consensual definition of what a "green economy" approach entails. Reports, declarations and discussions assume that a "green economy" can be equated with a cluster of economic policies, under the sustainable development paradigm, so as to bridge the gap between the economy and the environment. However, this assumption is far from settled.
3. An understanding of the scope and possible benefits of a "green economy" approach, as well as its risks and costs, is necessary to avoid replicating a discussion on the interrelationship between environment, economy and society, or on the distinctions between the development challenges facing the developing world and the situation of developed countries, that was conceptually concluded 18 years ago in UNCED. Moreover, in the Nusa Dua Declaration, environment ministers set the context of the concept of the green economy in relation to the environment pillar of sustainable development and acknowledged the need to further define it. We must also explore its relationship to the economic and social pillars of sustainable development.
4. There is no need to redefine sustainable development. No valid argument can be sustained for abandoning the concept of sustainable development and replacing it with an imprecisely defined, abstract concept.

Co-Chairs,

5. In this preparatory process leading up to the UNCSD in 2012, we must assess if this new concept could lead to duplication of efforts or an attempt to sideline the concept of sustainable development and its requirements. The limits of the concept of "green economy" should be clarified in full. Does an approach based on "a green economy" add value to the paradigm of sustainable development? Or does it compete with the agreed multilateral conceptual framework for sustainable development? Moreover, how does it relate to the fundamental principles agreed in UNCED (Agenda 21, Rio Declaration) and WSSD (Johannesburg Declaration, Johannesburg Plan of Implementation)?
6. Up to now, the approach offered by "green economy" does not reflect clearly the disparity between countries, which translates as different development challenges and the many possible interactions among environmental, economic and social factors. The underlying differences in the development processes and the structures of the economies and societies between the developed and developing countries have been captured in the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. This distinction also points to the fact that there is not

one single model for sustainable development, much less for a "green economy", that would fit all countries. "Green economy" definitions would thus require a certain degree of flexibility and the consideration of the different levels of economic, social and environmental development in different countries. An universalist and uniform approach to the concept of "green economy" is not warranted.

7. In order for the benefits of applying "green economy" as a concept to outweigh the risks, it should be firmly rooted under the paradigm of sustainable development, respecting the policy space of each country to define their own paths towards sustainability in their economy and society, in accordance with their own circumstances and priorities.

8. Since implementation of the internationally-agreed development goals, including the MDGs, and the MEAs is still lagging, the approach offered by a "green economy" might prove useful if it would assist in the implementation of policies that provide incentives to production, consumption and resilient economic development, protect and use environmental resources sustainably, and promote social well-being, in the short and long term.

Co-Chairs,

9. The transition to a "green economy" should not lead to conditionalities, parameters or standards which might generate unjustified or unilateral restrictions in the areas of trade, financing, ODA or other forms of international assistance. Illegitimate barriers to trade - tariff and non-tariff - could emerge if the discussions are geared towards or captured by protectionist interests, which might ultimately lead to "green protectionism" proposals that would run counter to the multilateral trading system.

10. Moreover, there should be no attempt to limit the sovereign rights of developing countries over their natural resources, as reflected in Principle 2 of the Rio Declaration.

11. How could the "green economy" approach contribute to the implementation of policies for poverty eradication and for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs, in particular MDGs 7 and 8? How can the concept advance the development, deployment, and transfer of sustainable, environmentally-sound technology, the sharing of know-how and the provision of new and additional financial resources, including increased ODA, to developing countries? What would be the implications to macro-economic policies and to international trade of a green economy approach? How to avoid "green protectionism"? Are there parameters to define what falls under the general banner of "green economy"? The G77 expects that these and other questions will be discussed and explored in depth during this preparatory process, so as to ensure a meaningful outcome at the 2012 UNCSD for developing countries.

I thank you.