



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, ON AGENDA ITEM 22 (A) AND (B), GROUPS OF COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL SITUATIONS, AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 21 October 2013)

Madam Chair,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. I would like to acknowledge the Secretary-General's reports and thank the secretariat for presenting them this morning for our consideration under Agenda Item 22 (A) and (B).
3. For the least developed countries (LDCs), the Istanbul Program of Action, adopted by the 4th United Nations Conference for LDCs in 2011, is an expression by the international community to assist the LDCs' national efforts towards achieving poverty eradication, structural transformation and sustainable development. While there has been some modest progress two years into the process of implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, we note with concern that most of the LDCs continue to face pervasive poverty, serious structural impediments to growth, low levels of human development and high exposure to shocks and disasters. More worrisome, as pointed out by the report, is that the deteriorating global economic environment is being transmitted to the least developed countries through declining Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) flows, therefore threatening the reversal of those modest gains and the ability to expand such gains.
4. Addressing these challenges and achieving the goal to have at least half of the LDCs to meet graduation criteria by 2020, bold actions and a strengthened partnership for development are urgently required, especially with respect to the fulfillment of agreed commitments such as the provision of 0.15-0.20 per cent of GNI as ODA for the LDCs. The fulfillment of commitments also include timely implementation of duty-free and quota free market access, on a lasting basis for all of the LDCs. Concerted efforts are also required to reverse the decline in the mobilisation of resources for the Aid for Trade Initiative for the LDCs.
5. Since the LDCs are lacking behind in meeting most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the international community should give due priority to the LDCs in order to accelerate progress in their attainment of MDGs by 2015. Specific attention should be given to productive capacity-building, which is essential to growth, structural transformation and creation of decent jobs.

Madam Chair,

6. The Istanbul Programme of Action recognises that science, technology and innovation play an important role in development. All least developed countries are lagging behind in these critical areas which are key drivers for transformation and have great potential to change the development landscape of least developed countries if developed and harnessed properly. Least developed countries have often not been able to move beyond outdated technologies that characterise their production processes and outputs. Acquiring new technologies and building domestic capacity and

a knowledge base to be able to fully utilise acquired technologies and promoting indigenous capacity on a sustainable basis for research and development are needed to enhance productive capacities in least developed countries. Furthermore, development of this sector should help to bridge the digital divide and technology gap in support of rapid poverty eradication and sustainable development.

7. The Istanbul Programme of Action for LDCs called for undertaking, on a priority basis, by 2013 a joint gap and capacity analysis with the aim of establishing a Technology Bank and Science, Technology and Information supporting mechanism. This Technology Bank and mechanism are to be dedicated to helping LDCs to improve their scientific research and innovation base, promoting networking among researchers and research institutions, helping least developed countries access and utilise critical technologies, and drawing together bilateral initiatives and support by multilateral institutions and the private sector, building on the existing international initiatives. This call has been reiterated in subsequent resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

8. We commend the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and substantive report on "technology bank and science, technology and innovation supporting mechanism dedicated to LDCs" contained in document A/68/217. The report skilfully sketches the key functions of a technology bank for LDCs, which includes the following. Firstly, a patents bank to help the least developed countries access and utilise appropriate technologies; Secondly, a science, technology and innovation supporting mechanism to help improve the scientific research and innovation base of the least developed countries; and thirdly, a science and technology research depository facility to promote global networking of researchers and research institutions in the least developed countries. The suggested three arms of the proposed technology bank represent the three specific functions as was decided in the Istanbul Program of Action.

9. We underscore the need for full and effective operationalization of the technology bank for LDCs at the earliest. We call for a concrete decision on the establishment of the Bank during the current session of the General Assembly. We commend the offer of the Government of Turkey to host the technology bank. In a genuine gesture to assist the LDCs, we call upon all development partners to extend their full support to the LDCs in ensuring the meaningful functioning of the Technology Bank.

Madam Chair,

10. The Group reiterates its recognition of the special needs of and challenges faced by the landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) caused by their lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from major international markets making the LLDCs highly dependent on transit countries for their seaborne trade. They also face additional border crossings, cumbersome transit procedures, inefficient logistics systems, weak institutions and poor infrastructure, all of which substantially increase the total costs of transport services and other trade transaction costs.

11. The economic growth and social well-being of LLDCs remain very vulnerable to external shocks as well as the multiple challenges the international community faces including the financial and economic crisis, and climate change. We underscore the need for the international community to enhance development assistance to LLDCs to help them overcome their vulnerabilities, build resilience and set themselves on a path of sustainable social and economic development. To urgently address the special development needs of and challenges faced by the landlocked and transit developing countries, we call upon the international community, including donor countries, to strengthen their assistance through genuine partnership with sufficient support and cooperation to

help the LLDCs to effectively implement the priorities of the Almaty Programme of Action and its successor programme.

12. The Group welcomes the decision of the General Assembly in its resolutions 66/214 of December 2011 and 67/222 of December 2012, to hold a comprehensive ten-year review conference of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2014, which should be preceded by regional and global as well as thematic preparations in a most effective, well-structured and broad participatory manner. In this regard, we call upon the international community, including the United Nations system, development partners, international organizations, private sector institutions, and academia, to critically consider special needs of and challenges faced by LLDCs, and to help develop priorities for a new, more comprehensive, common action-oriented framework of LLDCs for the next decade.

13. The Group of 77 and China encourages the participation of landlocked developing countries, transit countries, donor countries and international financial and developing institutions at the highest possible level in the Regional Review Meeting for Latin America on the Almaty Program of Action, to be held in Asuncion, Paraguay, this November.

I thank you, Madam Chair!

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