



**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, CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE THIRD OPEN-ENDED CONSULTATION ON THE FORMAT AND ORGANIZATIONAL MODALITIES OF THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (New York, 21 March 2013)**

Co-Facilitators,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. I wish to express the Group's appreciation to you for calling this open-ended consultation on the format and organisational modalities of the High-level Political Forum (HLPF). I would also like to acknowledge the two useful documents that you have provided to us, namely the HLPF-Institutional Format chart and the note on the non-exhaustive elements on the format and organisational modalities of the HLPF.
3. The Group of 77 is fully cognizant of the time constraints upon which the HLPF must be established in line with the decision contained in the Rio+20 Outcomes Document. However, given the importance of the HLPF for keeping the sustainable development agenda under active review and consideration, it is imperative that all States are given ample time to reflect on the proposed elements for a future draft resolution on the HLPF. The Group of 77 would appreciate if documents of future meetings be made available with more time in advance in order to allow for proper consultations and coordination.
4. The Group of 77 wishes to make preliminary comments at this stage. At the outset, we wish to reiterate that the HLPF is a universal, intergovernmental high level political forum. In this regard, we recall that the mandate for the HLPF as stated in Rio+20 is to follow up on the implementation of sustainable development and should avoid overlap with existing structures, bodies and entities in a cost-effective manner.
5. On the question of universality, the Group of 77 would like to further analyse how this important principle can ensure universal participation of all States under the proposed hybrid option, considering the universal nature of the HLPF and the limited membership of the ECOSOC. It is critical that the final format of the HLPF allows the participation of all States on an equal basis, particularly in decision-making. The Group of 77 is of the view that we must explore an option that allows a decision-making process that gives all States the guarantees needed. Furthermore and in conformity and respect of the universal participation character of the HLPF, the Group of G77 kindly asks the distinguished co-facilitators to use the terminology "All States" instead of "Member States" in the coming drafts.
6. Since the HLPF is an intergovernmental forum, the Group of 77 believes that its outcome should be a Ministerial Declaration at the ECOSOC level and a Head of States Declaration at the General Assembly level. The preparatory work of the outcomes should be intergovernmental negotiated by a senior expert meeting. The President's summary emanating from the Ministerial Session, which all States have no role in drafting, is unacceptable to the Group of 77 and should not be a substitute for an intergovernmentally agreed outcome.

Co-Facilitators,

7. The Group of 77 believes that the HLPF should be the main platform for political leadership and decision-making on sustainable development, integrating its three dimensions while using the power and functions of the General Assembly and the ECOSOC, whenever either are needed. We should explore further to build on the strength of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR), and the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) without losing the specific focus given to sustainable development in the UN agenda. At the same time, the Group of 77 considers that it will be useful to convene a High-level segment of the GA to attract Heads of State and Government at regular intervals. Such arrangements would help to improve the implementation and integration of sustainable development.

8. We had agreed in Rio that the HLPF is to replace the CSD. Paragraph 84 of the Rio+20 Outcomes Document clearly stipulates that the HLPF is to build on the strength, experiences, resources and inclusive participation modalities of the CSD. It is important to remember that one of the major shortcomings of the CSD relates to its weak implementation of sustainable development, and the integration of its three dimensions. The lessons learned from twenty years of the work of the CSD should be a starting point for giving final shape to its replacement.

9. The Group of 77 welcomes the suggestion to have annual regional preparatory meetings to be organised by the Regional Commissions before the HLPF. It is important to reflect on the regional dimension in these discussions and for them to be included in the outcome document for submission to the Ministerial Session.

10. Lastly, the Group of 77 wishes to seek clarification on the funding arrangements for the HLPF, taking note of the suggestion to establish the Forum's voluntary trust fund.

Co-Facilitators,

11. The Group of 77 and China stands ready to contribute more substantively on this item and in a more detailed fashion when we next meet. We assure you once again of the Group's support and its commitment to engage constructively in this process.

Thank you.