



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. GENERAL SURASAK KARNJANARAT, MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND, AT THE PLENARY OF THE HIGH-LEVEL THEMATIC DEBATE ON ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (New York, 21 April 2016)**

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

At the outset, allow me to express appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for convening this High Level Thematic Debate on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Today's event reaffirms the presidency's priority and commitment in promoting early action and timely implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Group of 77 and China believes that eradicating of poverty in all its forms and dimensions is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. We seek assurance that we collectively enhance the development agenda of the South through a people-centered and balanced approach, building strength from within and being resilient to external shocks. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, we must have sustainability mindset in respect of the environment and give full consideration for future generations. No one should be left behind.

Mr. President,

The Group believes that each country has the sovereign right to decide its own development priorities and strategies and that there is no "one size fits all" approach. In this regard, we stress the need for policy space and policy flexibility for developing countries. In this context, the imposition of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions, against developing countries, do not contribute to economic development, including dialogue and understanding among countries.

Furthermore, we stress that achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda will depend on enabling international environment for development, facilitating the necessary means of implementation, particularly in the areas of finance, international trade, technology and capacity-building to developing countries.

In this regard, the Group calls for a sincere and effective follow up on global commitments of all actors, particularly developed countries. We believe that the United Nations is critical as it exhibits strong convening power to urge and engage national leaders and actors to follow up on global commitments, especially in the Financing for Development Forum and the High Level Political Forum.

Mr. President,

On our part, the Group is committed and will participate constructively in the follow-up and review of progress.

This commitment will deepen cooperation and coordination within the United Nations system on sustainable development programmes and policies, and promote the sharing of lessons learnt among nations in the pursuit of poverty eradication and sustainable development.

I thank you.