



**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR PETER THOMSON, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FIJI TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE PLENARY MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY CONVENED ON THE OCCASION OF THE GLOBAL LAUNCH OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF QUINOA, 2013 (New York, 20 February 2013)**

Mr. President,  
His Excellency, Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia,  
His Excellency, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations,  
His Excellency, Mr. Rafael Roncagliolo Orbegoso, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Peru,  
His Excellency Mr. Javier Ponce Cevallos, Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Aquaculture and Fisheries of Ecuador,  
His Excellency Mr. José Graziano da Silva, Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations,  
Honored Guests,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I have the honour to deliver this Statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. We note with appreciation the sentiments in the statements that have been echoed this morning to mark the launch of the International Year of Quinoa. 2013 has been declared "The International Year of Quinoa" in recognition of the indigenous peoples of the Andes, who, thanks to their traditional knowledge and living practices, have maintained, controlled, protected and preserved Quinoa as a food for present and future generations.
3. Quinoa is the only plant food that contains all the essential amino acids, vitamins and trace elements and is also gluten free. Moreover this crop is extraordinarily adaptable to different agro-ecological floors being grown in areas with relative humidity from 40% to 88%, from sea level to 4000m and in temperatures from -8 °C to 38 °C. It is a water efficient crop and is tolerant and resistant to the lack of soil moisture.
4. The Group of 77 views the launch of the International Year of Quinoa as constituting a first step in an ongoing process to focus world attention on the Quinoa's important role. Quinoa's biodiversity and nutritional value make it central to providing food security and nutrition and to poverty eradication, in support of the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals including the Millennium Development Goals. We expect all initiatives to be implemented during the International Year of Quinoa and the proposed programmes and actions in the Master Plan to be a catalyst to enable the exchange of information and start to generate medium and long-term programs and projects for the sustainable development of the cultivation of Quinoa nationally and globally.

Mr. President,

5. The Group of 77 takes due note of the proposed themes of the High-level Panel on Food security and nutrition during this global launch of the International Year of Quinoa. We wish to recall and highlight the Rio +20 Outcome Document which re-established the right of everyone to have access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the

fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger.

6. The situation of food production and distribution in the world presents challenges of great magnitude to the four pillars of food security: availability, access, consumption and biological utilization. In this context, Quinoa constitutes a strategic crop with potential to contribute to food security and sovereignty due to its inherent qualities. We refer to this: nutritional quality, genetic variability, adaptability to adverse climate and soil conditions, and low production cost. The cultivation of Quinoa provides an alternative for countries with limited food production, which are therefore forced to import or receive food aid.

7. The Group notes that in light of extensive research carried out to date, Quinoa is one of the few crops that develop without much difficulty in extreme climate and soil conditions. Its great adaptability to climate variability and its efficient use of water make Quinoa an excellent alternative crop in the face of climate change which is altering the agricultural calendar and causing ever more extreme temperatures.

Mr. President,

8. The Group of 77 emphasizes the urgent need to increase efforts at the national, regional and international level to address food security and agriculture development as an integral part of the international development agenda. In this connection, we call for enhanced and lasting international partnership and cooperation among public, non-governmental and private stakeholders in the Quinoa crop. We stress the need for sustained funding and increased targeted investment to enhance world food production and call for new and additional financial resources from all sources to achieve sustainable agriculture development and food security.

9. It will be remiss for the Group not to take advantage of this occasion to reemphasize that agricultural subsidy and other trade distortions by developed countries have severely harmed the agricultural sector in developing countries. They have limited the ability of this key sector to contribute meaningfully to poverty eradication, rural development and sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth. Therefore, we again urge the developed countries to demonstrate the necessary flexibility and political will to meaningfully address these key concerns of developing countries.

10. In conclusion, the Group wishes to acknowledge specifically the presence of the Special Ambassadors of the International Year of Quinoa, H.E. Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, President of Bolivia and Ms. Nadine Heredia, First Lady of Peru. It is our desire to see Quinoa - a future sown thousands of years ago- recognized and accepted all throughout the world as a natural food resource with vital role in food security, nutrition, and the eradication of poverty in support of the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

I thank you.