



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 INFORMAL BRIEFING ON THE DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) (New York, 28 March 2013)

Co-Chairs,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. The Group of 77 wishes to express its gratitude to you co-chairs for convening this informal briefing on the draft programme of work of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We also acknowledge receipt of the draft programme of work circulated only yesterday. In view of the importance of the SDGs within the future framework of a global development agenda, it is imperative that all States are given sufficient time to reflect on the OWG's proposed programme of work. The Group of 77 would appreciate if documents of future meetings are made available with more time in advance in order to allow for proper consultations and coordination.

Co-Chairs

3. The Group of 77 wishes to make preliminary comments at this stage. At the outset, we are concerned that the consultations recently undertaken prior to this meeting lacked transparency and inclusiveness. The Group reiterates that the OWG is an intergovernmental process, which requires that all OWG meetings on SDGs be conducted in an 'inclusive', 'open' and 'transparent' manner. In this regard, the Group of 77 stresses the importance of inclusive consultations by the co-chairs, to consult all relevant stakeholders including major political groups.
4. As the OWG begins its deliberation on substantive issues relating to the SDGs, it is important to underscore that the process must be member-driven and not externally imposed. States need to identify the thematic and priority issues, guided by the principles of the Rio+20 Outcomes Document, and the need to balance the three dimensions of sustainable development. It is essential therefore that the OWG first conducts a conceptual debate and carries out a mapping exercise on the SDGs. Subsequent to this mapping exercise, a Program of Work could be drawn up to discuss the categorization of cross-cutting and stand-alone issues that would shape the design and formulation of SDGs.

Co-Chairs,

5. On the organisational aspects of the OWG, the Group of 77 believes that holding a 3-day meeting every month could pose financial and logistical difficulties for many developing countries, especially when capital-based officials are expected to participate in these meetings. A 5-day session taking place every two months is therefore considered more feasible.
6. As for the format of the discussions in the Working group, the Group of 77 is of the view that the participation of panelists should be limited to allow more time for an exchange of views amongst States and other relevant stakeholders. It is critically important for States to have sufficient space to

interact and to provide a leadership role in the discussions. Panel discussion should be limited to one morning or afternoon session.

7. To properly reflect the views of all States and relevant stakeholders, the Group of 77 proposes the appointment of a Rapporteur to cover all the meetings as opposed to having a Chair's summary. It is important to have a clear and inclusive document.

Co-Chairs,

8. The Group of 77 and China reiterates its readiness to play a constructive role in the work of this Open Working Group on the SDGs.

Thank you.