



REMARKS ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY THE COUNSELLOR FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, MR THEMBELA NGCULU, PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON THE DRAFT DISCUSSION DOCUMENT FOR DECLARATION, AS PREPARED BY THE CO-FACILITATORS OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATIONS ON THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA (New York, 20 February 2015)

As mentioned yesterday, the Group would like to thank the Co-Facilitators and the Secretariat for the efforts made to ensure that a draft discussion paper is put together for reflection by Member States before the conclusion of this current Session. The Group understands the difficulties of working under extreme pressures and tight timeframes.

We believe these informal consultations will help strengthen the draft declaration and serve as a solid basis for further engagement.

Co-facilitators,

We take the floor to make preliminary observations, as you will agree with the Group, more time is needed to consult on this draft discussion paper and evolving process.

- For now we must avoid making pronouncements on the length of the document as that will be determined by the contents of the declaration itself as the process unfolds;
- The Group expects a discussion document that reflects a balance of the SDGs as contained in the OWG-SDGs Report in order to provide a basis for a transformative and ambitious vision for the future. The transition from the MDGs to the SDGs and lessons learnt should also be addressed.
- Additionally we need to adhere to the agreed conceptual frameworks such as the OWG on SDGs Report to ensure integration of the three dimensions of Sustainable Development, while also drawing on the previous outcomes related to Sustainable Development, in particular in the economic, social and environmental spheres. The declaration must accentuate the importance of balance and integration;
- The Group realizes that in order to achieve Sustainable Development in its three dimensions there are different approaches, visions, models and tools available to each country.
- Our view is that paragraphs addressing the imperative poverty eradication must be frontloaded as this imperative is the overarching goal of the post-development agenda;
- The Group notes the listing of challenges, however it is our understanding that the list is not exhaustive. In this regard we trust that an opportunity will either be provided again for the Group to provide more inputs in line with the Group statement delivered on Tuesday or the next iteration will make mention of a list of challenges afflicting developing countries;
- The Group notes that the declaration makes no mention of important agreed concepts and principles such as sovereignty, territorial integrity, self-determination, cultural diversity, equality, social inclusion and Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) patterns.

- We need clarity on the use phrase "common fundamental values." The Group would prefer to adhere to agreed formulation namely, "purposes and principles of the UN charter" which is regarded as universally agreed language. We must avoid new concepts that have not been universally negotiated and agreed as this could easily impede progress in our work;
- Most importantly, the Group notes that there is no reflection of "policy space" in the declaration to ensure national ownership and alignment with national development plans and programs. Any reference to the rule of law should be qualified with "national and international levels."
- While the notion of differentiation is acknowledged in the document the Group would have preferred to see clear reference to the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR). The Group reiterates its view that the seminal principle of CBDR cannot be re-negotiated;
- The Group insists that the concept of "mutual accountability" doesn't correspond with the follow-up and review framework in place under the High-level Political Forum as agreed by member States. At the international level there will be a review process, State-led and on a voluntary basis, which will also include follow up and review of commitments on means of implementation, among other functions, as defined in HLPF resolution (67/290);
- It is critically important to frontload the fact that the post-2015 development agenda will be adopted in 2015, a year in which the UN celebrates 70th Anniversary;
- In our view the OWG on SDGs will serve as the main basis for the integration of the SDGs into the post-2015 development agenda while other inputs will also be considered. The Group reiterates its view that the use of other inputs should in no way temper with the substance and political balance of the OWG on SDGs Report;
- While we recognize that mention of the means of implementation was made in the discussion document we wish to emphasize that the means of implementation in the form of financial assistance, technology transfer and development, and capacity building remain of critical importance to the Group of 77 and China.
- Lastly the Group reiterates that the declaration must reflect a vision of sustainable development that prioritizes the needs of developing countries and deepen cooperation for the benefit of all in international relations and global partnership.

Co-facilitators,

The Group will continue to engage in this session to ensure common understanding of what could emerge as a declaration for the post-2015 development agenda.

The Group would also like to better understand the status to be given to this discussion document once it has been revised, and how it will be used in future.

Once again thank Co-facilitators for the time allowed to ensure proper coordination within the Group.