



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 THEMATIC DISCUSSION OF THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION, AND THE POTENTIAL OF CULTURE, FOR PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ACHIEVING THE MDGS (Geneva, Switzerland, 2 July 2013)

Mr. President,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. The Group of 77 and China endorses the theme of this year's Annual Ministerial Review: science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the MDGs. The MDGs have provided a common vision and a focus for collective endeavour towards achieving remarkable progress over the last decade. However, we are cognisant of the unevenness and implementation gaps in our achievement and the enormous challenges that remain in developing countries as we approach 2015. The MDGs remain critical for meeting the basic needs of people living in developing countries, particularly the poorest and most disadvantaged. We must renew our political commitment and redouble our collective efforts in achieving the MDGs and in eradicating poverty as we elaborate on the post-2015 development agenda.
3. Science, technology, innovation (STI) and culture are both essential enablers and drivers for the achievement of the MDGs. Inclusive and equitable access to the benefits of STI, as well as culture, is critical for ensuring that development is truly sustainable in all its three dimensions. The existing and emerging challenges, both at national and global levels include: climate change, unsustainable consumption and production patterns, loss of biodiversity, stagnated economic growth, as well as the increasing marginalisation of the poor. These place great urgency on international cooperation to facilitate an adequate diffusion of scientific and technical knowledge, and the transfer of access to and acquisition of technology for developing countries, to assist their efforts in eradicating poverty and achieving development goals. While we welcome the rising global prosperity powered by STI in the last two decades, we remain very concerned that for the majority of the developing countries, access to the benefits of STI remains uneven.
4. In this regard, the Group of 77 urges the Secretary-General, in accordance with the request made by the General Assembly, to take immediate steps to establish a technology bank and a science, technology and innovation supporting mechanism dedicated to the LDCs. Furthermore, the Group supports the Secretary-General's report and its recommendations to the 67th General Assembly regarding the possible options for a technology facilitation mechanism. We invite all Member States and relevant stakeholders to engage actively in a constructive manner in this debate, with a view to establishing a globally effective mechanism on technology facilitation. This mechanism must seriously address the technology needs of developing countries, including the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies and capacity-building. It is only through improved access by developing countries to existing and new technologies, as well as promoting the development of their own technological capabilities, that developing countries will be able to bridge the current imbalances and gaps in the STI fields.

5. In order to ensure no one is left behind in STI development, while working towards the achievement of MDGs on poverty eradication, it is imperative for developed countries to support developing countries, through North-South cooperation, to reduce their technological dependence, the digital divide and to bridge the existing technology gap. It is clear that to achieve the MDGs, strengthened international cooperation is needed to improve support to developing countries towards greater STI development. This will require the mobilization of financial resources, capacity-building and the sharing of best practices as well as technology transfer, on favourable terms, including concessional and preferential terms, to assist developing countries in reducing the imbalances in science, technology, innovation and development. It is important for developed countries to honour their international obligations and commitments for technological transfer, as expressed in numerous outcomes of international conferences and summits, including the Rio Summit in 2012.

6. The Group of G77 would like to name several areas where international cooperation is vital to promoting greater STI development in developing countries as well as advancing national capacity-building. It is noted that certain technological standards and certification systems are required of developing countries as prerequisites for them to utilize and access technology transfer. The areas of assistance include: infrastructure, funding mechanisms for research, commercialisation of scientific knowledge, strategic partnerships for technology transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies, access to venture capital and technology transfer, including measures for improving absorptive and technological capacity. Moreover, the international community could assist developing countries in education through infrastructure assistance, quality improvement and increased international education exchanges, including fellowships and scholarships. It is necessary to increase entrepreneurial skills, business training, technical, professional and vocational training through a lifelong learning process provided by a multi-stakeholder approach if we are to provide opportunities to all people.

Mr. President,

7. National capacity and institutional building on STI and culture, following national development priorities and circumstances, are also essential for the achievement of sustainable development. We stress the importance of designing policies to support STI, and to utilise the potential of culture within the framework of national development strategies for sustainable development, linking them to social, economic and environmental policies. While governments remain key drivers of STI investment, we recognise the increasing contribution of the private sector and other forms of partnership, including collaboration between public and private entities, research institutions, regional commissions and other development agencies.

8. At the government level, national governments need to play an increasing role in fostering environments that can generate research and development, innovation and technologies. In particular, increased foreign direct investment, enhanced market access and international cooperation are necessary. For example, mechanisms for funding of research need to be put in place to encourage and provide technical and vocational training in order to increase employment opportunities, including in the cultural and creative sectors. In line with this, the commercialisation of scientific and cultural knowledge will add to and benefit the knowledge base of developing countries. To ensure the sustainability of these measures, national governments need to design policies that not only foster, promote and ensure environments conducive for research in science, technology and innovation, but also guarantee greater inclusion of the poor, women, boys and girls. Gender-sensitive policies are required to promote the equitable participation of women and girls in education, academic and vocational institutions, in the employment sector as well as full participation at decision-making levels.

9. Furthermore, national governments need to make culture intrinsic to economic, social and environmental policies. Culture is inherent in all spheres of sustainable development. It is through culture that economic growth can progress, and through culture that we seize ownership of development processes. Developing country governments need assistance to promote their cultural industries, cultural tourism and culture-related microenterprises. In order to do so, infrastructure is necessary, as is the assurance of gender equality in the provision of the development of skills and information and communication technologies.

10. An area we would like to stress is traditional knowledge as an enhancer of science and technology. The Group of 77 holds the view that policies need to be designed to recognise, promote and preserve traditional knowledge, particularly in areas of agriculture, industry, culture and health care. In this respect, we call for preservation and maintenance of local and indigenous traditional knowledge and community practices of environmental management, which are valuable examples of culture as a vehicle for sustainable development. They foster synergies between modern science and technology and local and indigenous knowledge, innovations and practices. Accordingly, we call for an equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilisation of such knowledge, innovations and practice. It is imperative that the international community take effective steps to modify the existing intellectual property system to minimize any misappropriation of traditional knowledge.

11. The Group of 77 and China believes that STI solutions to development challenges that are already successful need to be enhanced and scaled up, nationally, regionally and internationally. Greater and stronger collaboration, including knowledge sharing and capacity building, among governments, research communities, the private sector and civil society improves the potential for States to practice scientifically sound, environmentally clean, development-friendly and socially inclusive decision-making, to effectively address current and emerging national and global development challenges.

I thank you, Mr. President.