



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. MR. VIRACHAI PLASAI, AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON AGENDA ITEM 26: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, AT THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE 71TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 4 October 2016)**

Madame Chair,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. At the outset, allow me the opportunity to extend our warmest congratulations to you Madame Chair and the other members of the Bureau on your election. We assure you of our full cooperation and steadfast support during this session of the Third Committee.
3. Turning to the important agenda at hand, the Group of 77 and China wish also, through you Madame Chair, to thank the Secretary-General for the submission of the reports under this agenda item. They offer thoughtful and useful information and reflections to stimulate our deliberations at this session.

Madame Chair,

4. This is an important year for social development. The historic adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda were major achievements of last year. The momentum for progress in those areas must be matched by progress in achieving the objectives of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.
5. At the 49th Commission on Social Development this year, Member States supported the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We agreed on a new priority theme for the 2017-2018 cycle, titled "Strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all". We reinvigorated our commitments to make progress on eradicating poverty, promoting full employment and decent work and social integration, in the context of our commitment to leave no one behind.

Madame Chair,

6. It has been twenty-one years since the World Summit for Social Development was held in Copenhagen and the adoption of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. But poverty eradication still remains a major challenge for the international community. Social exclusion continues to be a challenge in many parts of the world, by virtue of growing inequalities and decent-work deficits. The resulting negative impact on families, youth, older persons, and persons with disabilities is undeniable. It is crucial therefore, that national governments strengthen their efforts to promote and protect the needs, especially of those in vulnerable situations in society.
7. At the same time, the Group of 77 and China are also deeply concerned about the uneven progress achieved in fulfilling all of the interrelated commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development. We are concerned at the persistence of the current global crises. These

include, in particular, the world financial and economic crisis, the world food crisis and continuing food insecurity, the high rate of youth unemployment, the challenges posed by climate change, global health threats, violent extremism, terrorism and related humanitarian crises, and corruption. All of these challenges continue to threaten to reverse much of any progress made in recent decades, especially in the eradication of poverty.

8. We recognize that each country faces specific challenges to achieve sustainable development, and we underscore the special challenges facing the most vulnerable countries and, in particular, African countries, least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as the specific challenges facing the middle-income countries. Countries in situations of conflict also need special attention.

Madame Chair,

9. We must also be reminded of our commitments to fulfill our obligations in conformity with international law to remove obstacles to the full realization of the rights of peoples to self-determination in all cases where it is applicable, in particular those living under colonial and foreign occupation and other forms of alien domination, which continue to adversely affect their socio-economic development, with full respect to national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States.

10. At the same time, the Group of 77 and China must continue to underscore the crucial role of international cooperation, including north-south, south-south and triangular cooperation, in realizing the internationally agreed development goals, and most importantly, in promoting the Programme of Action of the Copenhagen Summit. The international community and development partners have a pivotal role to play in collaborating with and supporting developing countries in implementing their social development agenda.

11. The Group of 77 and China also cannot underline enough that the fulfillment of the commitments made by developed countries, both individual and collective, is imperative. We need to focus on a more strengthened, coherent and integrated development approach, including the fulfillment of commitments on internationally agreed official development assistance, and the timely implementation of all commitments under the global partnership for development. Only together can we overcome the challenges that, in one way or another, affect us all.

Madame Chair,

12. The Group of 77 and China welcome the continued focus on youth and persons with disabilities. We call on member states, the UN system and relevant stakeholders to continue to exert their utmost efforts on advancing inclusive job creation, skills development and vocational training for youth, as well as enhancing accessibility and working to ensure non-discrimination for persons with disabilities.

13. We are pleased to note that since the proclamation of the International Year of the Family in 1994, the international community continues to undertake a range of activities and commitments in support of its objectives. We continue to recognise that the observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014 provided a useful opportunity to strengthen national family-centered policies and programmes. It was also a welcome opportunity to share good practices, in areas like family poverty eradication, work-family balance, intergenerational solidarity, social exclusion and domestic violence.

14. We also continue to believe that we must prepare ourselves to respond better to the new realities of ageing populations, to include this changing age structure of populations in our efforts to eradicate poverty. The implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing is key and we should look for the most appropriate ways and means of achieving the development, well-being and full enjoyment of all human rights for older persons.

15. In this regard, we take note with appreciation of ongoing regional developments to strengthen the cooperation and legal frameworks for the promotion, protection and full enjoyment of the human rights and well-being of older persons, in particular the ASEAN Plus Three Statement on Active Ageing, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa, and the Inter-American Convention on Protecting the Human Rights of Older Persons.

Madame Chair,

16. As in previous sessions, the G77 and China are preparing for submission under this agenda item a number of draft resolutions and we look forward to valuable contributions and support of all Member States, with the aim of contributing to the achievement of our mutual goals in the field of social development.

I thank you.

