



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR MAHLATSE MMINELE, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON AGENDA ITEM 28: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, AT THE THIRD COMMITTEE OF THE 70TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 6 October 2015)**

M. Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. Allow me, at the outset, to extend our warmest congratulations to you Mr. Chairman and other members of the Bureau on your election. The Group of 77 and China wishes to assure you of its full cooperation and support during the deliberations at this session.
3. The Group wishes to thank the Secretary-General for the reports submitted under agenda item 28, which will continue to stimulate our discussions.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The analysis contained in the report of the Secretary-General provides us with an overview of the discussions held by the Commission for Social Development during its 53rd session on the priority theme for its 2015-2016 review and policy cycle, "Rethinking and strengthening social development in the contemporary world". In this regard, The Group of 77 and China continues to stress the need to further mainstream sustainable development at all levels, integrating economic, social and environmental aspects and recognizing their interlinkages, so as to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions.
5. The Group welcomes the newly adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in the spirit that no one in our societies shall be left behind. It is our understanding that for true sustainable development to be achieved, participation and inclusion of all members of our society will be required. Therefore, a people-centered approach to development is supported by our Group to ensure inclusivity and social protection of all members of our society, as well as the success of the new Agenda.
6. The Group of 77 calls for synergy between empowerment policies on the one hand and the ongoing work on the social pillar of the Rio+20 Outcomes and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on the other.
7. The Group of 77 and China considers that an empowering approach calls for comprehensive strategies that go beyond group-specific approaches. It is important that we all develop comprehensive policy frameworks that adopt universal approaches, in order to empower and meet the needs and aspirations of all members of society.
8. Also, supportive national institutional structures and participatory mechanisms are required for empowering people. There is too much work to be done in order to improve or develop participatory mechanisms that promotes the engagement and active participation of all members of society in public life, and the United Nations System should be prepared to assist member States in this

regard.

9. This year marks twenty years since the World Summit for Social Development was held in Copenhagen, but poverty eradication still remains a global challenge and, therefore, a priority for our Group. Social exclusion continues to be a challenge in many parts of the world, by virtue of growing inequalities, thus negatively affecting families, youth, older persons, and persons with disabilities. It is crucial that national governments strengthen their efforts in creating policies to promote and protect the needs of the most vulnerable groups in society. In this regard, the G77 and China remains fully committed to the implementation and the promotion of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, especially in the crucial transition to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

10. In this regard, the G77 and China underline the importance of the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen from 6 to 12 March 1995, and congratulate the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the World Summit that took place in the fifty third session of the Commission for Social Development and in the Economic and Social Council, in order to monitor and highlight the achievements of the World Summit for Social Development.

11. In this context, the Group of 77 and China is deeply concerned about the constraints on our fight against poverty arisen from current global crises, in particular the world financial and economic crisis, the world food crisis and continuing food insecurity, the energy crisis, the challenge posed by climate change, the global health threats, the spiralling conflict, violent extremism, terrorism and related humanitarian crises and forced displacement of people, which threaten to reverse much of the development progress made in recent decades.

Mr. Chairman,

12. We must be committed to fulfill our obligations in conformity with international law through taking further collective and concrete actions to remove all obstacles that are incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person 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, which continue to adversely affect their socio-economic development.

13. The Group reaffirms in accordance with the Charter of the UN, the need to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of States.

14. Cognisant of these challenges, the G77 and China underscores the crucial role of international cooperation, including north-south, south-south and triangular cooperation, in realizing the internationally agreed development goals, and most importantly promoting the Programme of Action of the Copenhagen Summit. On this note, the Group stresses that the international community and development partners have an important role to play in collaborating with and supporting the developing countries in implementing their social development agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

15. The fulfillment of the commitments by developed countries, both individual and collective is crucial and imperative. In this regard, the Group calls for 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.

Mr. Chairman,

16. The Group of G77 and China welcomes the continued focus on youth and calls upon member states, the UN system and relevant stakeholders to fully implement the recommendations contained in the outcome document of the UN High-level Meeting on Youth held in 2011, which outlined 17 areas of action on youth issues, including specific measures for advancing inclusive job creation, skills development and vocational training designed for specific labour-market needs.

17. We are pleased to note that since the proclamation of the International Year of the Family in 1994, the international community has undertaken a range of activities and commitments in support of its objectives. 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 and to share good practices, in the areas like family poverty eradication, work-family balance, intergenerational solidarity, social exclusion and domestic violence.

18. As population ageing continues, with its positive effects and its challenges, we must prepare to better respond to this new reality, to include the changing age structure of populations in our efforts to eradicate poverty. The implementation of the Madrid Plan of Action is key; we should look for the most appropriate ways and means of achieving the development, well-being and full enjoyment of all human rights of older persons taking into account the second review and appraisal of the implementation. In this regard, we take note with appreciation of the regional developments regarding the strengthening of the legal framework for the protection and promotion of the rights of older persons, in particular the recent draft Protocol to the African Charter to 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.

Mr. Chairman,

19. Following the practice of previous sessions, the G77 and China will submit under this agenda item the following three draft resolutions: 1) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, 2) Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing, and 3) The International Year of the Family. The Group looks forward to the valuable contributions and support of all member states.

20. In closing, the G77 and China looks forward to engaging in the discussions with partners with the aim of contributing to the achievement of our mutual goals in the field of social development.

Thank you.