



**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 CONSULTATIONS ON THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION 61/16 OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, ON THE STRENGTHENING OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (New York, 29 January 2013)**

Co-Facilitators,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. The relevance and effectiveness of ECOSOC as the principal organ of the United Nations for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue and recommendations on issues of economic and social development, as well as for implementation of the international development goals agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Millennium Development Goals, has diminished over the years.
3. The G77 and China commends the choice of the topic you have identified to be the focus of today's informal discussion. "How to make ECOSOC more Relevant" - as a "hub", as a "platform" and as a "player". An effective and relevant "hub" where the wider UN development System, together with the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWIs), the World Trade Organization (WTO), UNCTAD, civil society and other stakeholders can debate and meaningfully cooperate to enrich each others' work within their respective mandates and responsibilities. How to make ECOSOC to be a more relevant and effectual "platform" for follow up and monitoring of the implementation of agreed outcomes of the major economic, social and environmental UN Conferences and Summits; and lastly, how to ensure an ECOSOC that is more relevant as a "player", integrating the three dimensions (economic, social and environment) of Sustainable Development.

Co-Facilitators,

4. In order to enhance ECOSOC's relevance, a new transformational vision is necessary. The Group believes that in designing this new vision, ECOSOC must first and foremost look within itself, at its own composition and ask whether its current membership is truly reflective of the principle of "equitable geographical representation". The current disparity in representation must be addressed if ECOSOC is to be relevant.
5. The Group believes that as an important body of the United Nations, the ECOSOC must be adequately resourced to carry out its mandate and work programs efficiently. In this regard, the Group submits that ECOSOC should have the budget to convene its own meetings to discuss substantive issues as and when it desires rather than exhausting time and resources focusing on procedural matters and organization of work as it currently does during the organizational session.

Co-Facilitators,

6. In our previous intervention, the Group expressed its concerns that the Spring Meeting is losing its influence. There is a sense that the level of representation is not high enough and there is lack of engagement both from delegations in New York and from the WTO, BWIs and UNCTAD

representatives. The current arrangement of holding alternate substantive ECOSOC meetings in Geneva is uneconomical to the United Nations and its members. It adversely affects participation from developing countries as most are unable to attend the session. To be more relevant as a hub, the Group proposes that all substantive discussions of ECOSOC are to be held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

7. The Group of 77 and China also believe that ECOSOC can substantially increase its relevance by becoming a platform for the prioritization of the implementation and follow up of the recommendations, outcomes, and decisions of major United Nations Conferences and Summits. For instance, the 2009 United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and its impact on Development had no follow up mechanism. ECOSOC would have been an appropriate platform for that follow up action. Furthermore, the Group is also of the view that the agenda of ECOSOC should be streamlined and prioritized to avoid duplication.

Co- Facilitators,

8. The Outcome of Rio + 20 has mandated ECOSOC to integrate the three pillars of Sustainable Development (Social, Economic and Environment) in its work programme. To be an effective player in carrying out this role, the Group believes that the ECOSOC's work programme must be synchronized with the wider United Nations agenda. Therefore, the Group encourages more interaction between ECOSOC and stakeholders including the United Nations General Assembly and other specialized UN bodies and Funds. In this connection, the ECOSOC Bureau and the 2nd Committee Bureau should discuss their respective programme of work in order to promote complementarities. Moreover, the Group also encourages regular meetings between the President of ECOSOC and the President of the United Nations General Assembly.

9. In conclusion, I would like to convey that the Group of 77 and China wishes to submit its written views and position on this item. However, prior to doing so, the Group would be grateful to be further informed by the Co-Facilitators as to what they have in mind with regards to the exercise. This after all is not the first time the United Nations has discussed this topic.

10. Our Group requires concrete outcomes. For the ECOSOC to remain relevant, it has to be truly equitably representative; it has to be empowered to convene its own meetings as and when necessary; all ECOSOC substantive sessions have to be held in New York; and concrete mechanisms have to be put in place to follow up and implement outcomes of major UN conferences and summits. Finally, unless the ECOSOC Work Programme is prioritized and synchronized with the wider United Nations Development Agenda, the relevance of the ECOSOC will continue to be questioned.

Thank you.