



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR. MMINELE MAHLATSE, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON AGENDA ITEM 20: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (New York, 19 October 2015)**

Mr Chairman,

I have the honour of making the following remarks on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The Group would like to express its gratitude to the Secretariat for the informative and incisive reports presented before us on Sustainable Development. These always prove useful not only in informing us of how far we have traversed but also of the task that still lies ahead.

The agenda item in front of us, that is sustainable development, is at the heart of our work. The challenges, vision, sustainable development goals and targets that are contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development talk to the essence of this agenda item.

Mr Chairman,

One of the consistent messages on which there is universal agreement is that eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge facing the world today. There is also no contesting the fact that eradicating poverty is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, in particular for developing countries.

We also agreed that each country has the primary responsibility for its own sustainable development and poverty eradication and that the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized. However, there is no gainsaying that concerted and concrete measures are required at all levels to enable developing countries to achieve their sustainable development goals related to the internationally agreed poverty-related goals and targets. In this regard, we emphasize that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities remains the foundation of global development efforts. We further emphasize the critical role of the international community in the provision of adequate, predictable, new and additional financial resources, transfer of technology and capacity building to developing countries towards the realisation of sustainable development.

Mr Chairman,

Hand in glove with the 2030 Agenda, the SAMOA Pathway is an apt action plan that captures the priorities and needs of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and serves as an instructive tool on how the international community should support the efforts of small island developing States towards achieving their sustainable development. It reaffirmed that SIDS remain a special case for sustainable development in view of their unique and particular vulnerabilities. In this connection, we call on the international community and the UN system to continue to give due consideration to the particularities and priorities of small island developing States as outlined in the SAMOA Pathway, and support their efforts to achieve sustainable development through genuine and durable partnerships, and other means of implementation. We further call to ensure adequate and effective linkages and coherence between the SAMOA Pathway and the 2030 Agenda.

Mr Chairman,

As we strive for sustainable development, there is an urgent need to build a better understanding and knowledge of the causes of disasters and to build resilience and strengthen coping capacities, in particular in developing countries. In this connection, we cannot overemphasise the importance of stronger interlinkages among disaster risk reduction, recovery and long-term development planning. The Sendai Declaration and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 - 2030 remain instructive towards this end.

And so it is with the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity which can significantly contribute to disaster risk reduction and to reducing the adverse impacts of climate change, including by adding resilience to fragile ecosystems and making them less vulnerable.

Mr Chairman,

The twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD (COP12) is currently taking place in Ankara, Turkey. As we await the outcomes thereof, it is our hope that deliberations will yield fruitful outcomes because desertification, land degradation, drought and climate change are closely related and have the potential to pose a serious challenge to sustainable development for all countries if they are not addressed.

The 21st session of the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC (COP21) will also take place in Paris, France this December. Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time, and its adverse impacts undermine the ability of all countries, especially developing countries, to achieve sustainable development. We look ahead to an ambitious and universal climate agreement that garners the widest possible international cooperation aimed at addressing the adverse impacts of climate change.

In conclusion,

Our efforts towards sustainable development should strive to achieve a just balance among the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations. In this regard, it would be instructive for us to continue to promote education for sustainable development and to integrate sustainable development more actively into our education systems. This would equip the future generations to better pursue sustainable development and treat Mother Earth far better than the current generation has and live a lot more in harmony with nature.

Thank you