



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 SECOND SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) (New York, 17 April 2013)

Co-Chairs,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. Firstly, allow me to convey the Group's appreciation to you, Co-Chairs, for all the arrangements relating to this second session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG SDG). The Group would like to thank you for revising the draft program of work for this meeting, which has largely reflected our earlier concern for the need to begin the substantive discussion with a member-driven conceptualisation and mapping exercise to lay a solid foundation for subsequent deliberations.
3. We take note of the proposed dates and duration of the upcoming formal meetings of the OWG. We welcome the program of work that the Co-Chairs have drawn, which serves the said purpose. However, we believe that the three explanatory notes on overarching framework, cross-sectoral issues and principles, at the beginning of the matrix are not part of the program for this session and therefore should not be mentioned in the program. We hope that concerns expressed by member countries can guide the Co-Chairs in future preparation of work in the OWG. In this regard, the Group of 77 reiterates its view that the identification of principles and the categorisation of cross-sectoral issues should be arrived at after this mapping exercise, which allow all States to contribute and identify their respective priority areas of sustainable development. Following the conceptualisation phase, it is our hope that the OWG program of work should be drawn in accordance with the outcome of our deliberation that includes agendas on principles, priorities, and means of implementation.
4. The Group of 77 also wants to commend the efforts of the Technical Support Team for producing the TST Issues Brief on Conceptual Issues. The brief has been useful in assisting us to reflect on the conceptual debate of sustainable development. In view of the diverse nature the SDGs and the expected circulation of technical and issues papers by UN agencies and other relevant experts over the course of future OWG meetings, the Group of 77 would appreciate such documents be made available with more time in advance in order to allow for proper consideration. The Group wishes to stress, however, that these papers are intended for information only and should not have any legal status in the final report of the OWG.

Co-Chairs,

5. The conceptual debate we are having now aims to determine the priority areas of sustainable development under an integrative approach. This debate should be guided by a vision of 'transformation' and an ambition to bring in a new development paradigm, which is people-centred, aspires for universal human development while respecting human dignity and protecting our planet, Mother Earth.

6. Before engaging in this conceptual debate, the Group of 77 emphasizes that the guiding principles of the SDGs must be based on those enumerated in Agenda 21 and Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), be consistent with international law, and should fully respect all Rio Principles and the sovereignty of States over their natural resources, including the need for all states to cooperate in a spirit of global partnership to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem and that States have Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR).

7. It is important that the SDGs reflect the different national realities, capacities and development priorities of all members of the United Nations and do not place additional restrictions or burdens on the national priorities and development plans of developing countries. On the contrary, SDGs should contribute to the fulfillment of the right of development for developing countries. Moreover, in fulfilling their SDGs, developing countries should be supported by an enabling international environment, which includes a supportive and just international system where the rules are fair and pro-development, as well as a genuine global partnership to enable developing countries to achieve the SDGs. This should be done through the provision of new and additional financing resources, technology transfer in concessional terms, capacity building, pro-development trade policies and effective means of implementation to developing countries.

Co-Chairs,

8. A good starting point for this debate is to examine the link between the MDGs and the SDGs. With an overarching objective to eradicate poverty in the context of sustainable development, the SDGs should build on what has been achieved so far in implementing the MDGs while at the same time renewing and strengthening our commitment towards addressing the implementation gaps and unrealised targets.

9. It is important to learn the lessons from the MDGs. This means that it is critical to get the content of the SDGs right at the beginning. For example, sustainable development agenda has to place the global economic and financial crisis at its heart in order to be relevant, and include the social and environmental crises as well. It must address the structural factors and root causes that give rise to these crises.

10. As the SDGs are to be formulated in the UN in the context of international cooperation, effective global partnership will be crucial for their success. In this regard, the Group of 77 is of the firm view that in the context of formulating the SDGs, there must be a significant section on strengthening the Global Partnership for Development that is to be conceived and designed in a systematically adequate manner.

11. The SDGs also need new indicators that will measure the degree of success. Each SDG should be linked with the strengthened Global Partnership for Development. These means of implementation must be supported by actions from developed countries at the international level, such as time-bound financing targets; associated trade and economic policies; technology transfer and other resources to assist and enable developing countries efforts.

Co-Chairs,

12. The Group of 77 is of the view that the future development framework, including the articulation of SDGs, should take into account issues that are not adequately addressed or not at all included under the MDG framework. The Group of 77 believes the following issues should constitute key elements of the three pillars of sustainable development, which should be formulated in a balanced

manner.

13. We believe we should focus our attention not only on those areas identified in the Rio+20 outcome document but also, inter alia, those development areas identified in Agenda 21, JPOI and other major development summits. Accordingly, the economic pillar could include the achievement of an adequate rate of inclusive economic growth; employment opportunities and decent work; financial stability; international financing for development; external debt restructuring; trade and development; technology transfer; industrialization in developing countries; sustainable agriculture; address the problem of speculation in commodity markets; productive capacity, infrastructure development and sustainable transport; having adequate policy space and instruments for sustainable development, as well as ensuring increased voice for developing countries in global economic governance.

14. The world financial and economic crisis of 2007-8 has underscored the gaps and failures in global economic governance, including within the International Financial Institutions (IFIs). The current turmoil in the world economy demonstrates that the international arrangements lack mechanisms to prevent financial crises with global repercussions. It is clear that the international monetary and financial arrangements need deep-set systemic reforms. It is fundamental for instance that developing countries be equitably represented in these IFIs and have an increasing voice in global economic governance.

15. In the context of structural reform of the IFIs, there is an urgent need for macroeconomic coordination in order to achieve a long lasting recovery. Disciplines of the macroeconomic order must be applied to all countries, and not just applicable only to developing countries. The international financial institutions must take concrete steps to democratise their actions, including increasing the participation of developing countries. Moreover, it is critically important that the financial sector is transparent and properly regulated so that the capital markets can be mobilised to achieve sustainable growth.

16. On the social pillar, it could include the multidimensional character of poverty; promote social protection measure; promote great equality at national and international levels; gender equality and empowerment of women; ensure access of all particularly the poor to affordable health, food, energy, water and sanitation, and education beyond the primary level; access to an effective justice system; and policies and measures to mitigate food security problems.

17. On the environmental pillar, this should include, among others, atmosphere and climate change; natural hazards; toxic chemical and waste; forests; oceans and seas; water; biodiversity; sustainable cities and human settlements; sustainable agriculture; desertification and land degradation; and sustainable consumption and production patterns.

18. In conclusion, the Group of 77 supports the view that the SDGs process should be coherent with, and integrated into, the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015. In this regard, the SDGs should contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and serve as a driver for implementation and mainstreaming of sustainable development in the United Nations system as a whole.

Co-Chairs,

19. The Group of 77 and China wishes to assure you of its readiness to engage constructively in the work of this Open Working Group on the SDGs.

Thank you.

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