



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 FIRST MEETING OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) (New York, 14 March 2013)

Co-Chairs,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. The Group of 77 is happy to see this Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG SDGs) commencing its work. We do not need to remind ourselves the arduous road that have led us to here, though it will be remiss of the Group not to acknowledge the vital role the President of the General Assembly (PGA) played in this process. The Group of 77 has held the view that it is imperative for the success of this multilateral endeavor that the wishes of all members are accommodated. The convening of today's meeting exhibits this achievement. The patience of the PGA and the flexibility of members must be commended.
3. The Group of 77 congratulates the Co- Chairs of the OWG SDGs for your election. Your role in steering the affairs of this Open Working Group will be crucial. Representation from the developed and developing world gives the assurance that all interests will be taken into consideration in a legitimate and balanced manner.
4. This being the first occasion upon which this open working group is meeting, the Group of 77 expresses its congratulation to the members of the OWG on their nomination. The Group of 77 reassures them of its support and trust that in the conduct of their affairs, they will consider and provide ample opportunities for all other members of the United Nations, relevant stakeholders from civil societies, the scientific community and the United Nations system to contribute to their deliberation in line with the mandate of the Rio +20 Outcome Document. It is vital for the success of this OWG that it is inclusive, open and transparent.

Co-Chairs

5. The Group of 77 notes that the main task of the OWG is to submit a report containing recommendations for sustainable developments goals to the Assembly at its sixty-eight session in September 2013 for consideration and appropriate action. In this respect, the Group of 77 will be engaging constructively in substantive discussions of the Working Group for the identification and formulations of these goals.
6. Paragraph 246 of the Rio+20 Outcomes Document states that the SDGs should be a driver for implementation and mainstreaming of sustainable development in the United Nations system as a whole. While the development of the SDGs must not divert focus or effort from the achievement of the MDGs, the Group stresses the need for serious concerted effort in this OWG towards developing a set of aspirational, concise, action-oriented and universally applicable sustainable development goals. These SDGs should be integrated into the United Nations' post-2015 development agenda in a way that incorporates the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and their interlinkages in a balanced manner.

7. Consistent with the mandate and spirit of the Rio+20 Outcomes Document, the development of the SDGs should be guided by a set of key principles with an overarching objective of achieving poverty eradication. Our efforts to achieve the MDGs have highlighted how poverty is multidimensional and that development must be achieved in a holistic sense. Any vision of sustainable development ideal for the 21st century must recognise that eradicating poverty, removing inequalities and achieving social justice is inextricably linked to ensuring ecological stability and renewal so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations. We must therefore increase our efforts towards changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, with developed countries taking the lead.

8. The Group of 77 underscores the fundamental importance for the SDGs to build upon and complement the MDGs. As we focus our attention on the SDGs, it is imperative that we learn from the lessons of the MDGs. One of the key shortcomings of the MDGs is the lack of accountability in the global partnership under MDG8. For example, MDG8 explicitly recognized the special needs of vulnerable countries and called for strengthening of commitments to increase Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) to LDC, LLDCs, SIDS, and MICs. However, the targets and indicators were not backed up by any quantitative nor time-bound targets. Little progress has been made in other areas of MDG 8, such as the development of a fair open trading system, dealing with the debt problem, providing access to medications in developing countries and making available the benefits of new technologies, including ICTs. This only highlights the need to create an enabling international environment that favors development. The Group believes that the post-2015 development agenda must enhance the global partnership for development, and further advance in all commitments contained in MDG8.

Co-Chairs,

9. A genuine global partnership must be founded on strong political will and shared responsibility. It requires strengthened commitment from our developed partners to provide international cooperation and sufficient policy space to developing countries, taking into account their different national circumstances, priorities and capabilities. In this regard, particular attention must be given to developing countries with a focus on eradicating the problem of inequality between and within countries.

10. In practice, this means that the development and implementation of SDGs must be based on the principle of 'common but differentiated responsibility'. It means that SDGs should not place additional restrictions or burdens on developing countries. Importantly, it requires the donor community to honor its international commitments especially those related to financial resources, technology transfer and capacity.

11. Elaborating on these commitments, they must be matched by the effective transfer of financial and technical resources, which improve conditions in the developing countries and assist in eradicating poverty. Transfer of technology must encompass technological cooperation and the necessary technical and commercial information to understand, use and develop cutting-edge technology with a view to promoting endogenous capacity to use and further develop such technologies. Moreover, the dissemination of related technological knowledge as well as technical and commercial cooperation is also important. Only through this effective transfer and sharing will it be possible to promote the use and subsequent development of technology by developing countries themselves.

12. Promoting mechanisms that strengthen capacity-building, the allocation of adequate, predictable and additional financial resources and the transfer of cutting edge technologies on

concessionary terms from the developed to the developing countries must be a top priority.

13. In addition, developing countries need a favorable international economic climate if their national development policies and programmes are to succeed. In this connection, the Monterrey Consensus provides the United Nations with a framework for promoting an economic climate favorable to development financing in its national, international and systemic aspects. We should continue working on these issues.

14. There is a need for an ample international dialogue with a view to building a new financial architecture that guarantees the democratization and transparency of financial management and institutions and in this sense, it is indispensable to guarantee the full participation of developing countries in the reform of the international economic and financial architecture, favorable to sustainable development. We must advance towards a far-reaching democratization of the international financial institutions, significantly increasing the voice, representation and voting power of developing countries

Co-Chairs,

15. The Group of 77 reiterates that for the SDGs to be successful, it is important that these goals be based on the outcomes of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation as well as outcomes of all UN major summits in the economic, social and environmental fields, including the Istanbul Program of Action, the Barbados Program of Action and Mauritius Strategy.

16. The Group of 77 further reiterates that the means of implementation identified in Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development are indispensable for translating the SDGs into tangible sustainable development outcomes. The Group of 77 is of the view that each SDG must be linked to an effective means of implementation.

17. In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China conveys its readiness to play a constructive role in the work of this Open Working Group on the SDGs.

Thank you.