



**REMARKS ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY
AMBASSADOR KINGSLEY J.N. MAMABOLO, PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED
NATIONS, CHAIR OF THE GROUP OF 77 , AT THE HIGH-LEVEL
INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE: THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR ACTION,
"WATER FOR LIFE": PROGRESS ACHIEVED AND LESSONS LEARNED FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (New York, 30 March 2015)**

Mr President,

I have the honour to present these remarks on behalf of the 134 member states of the Group of 77 and China.

The Group's participation in this High-level interactive dialogue is informed by the reality that the inability to provide clean water to communities contributes to poverty, inequality, poor health and under-development. It is also informed by the knowledge that water is essential for our efforts to develop our agricultural sectors, industrialise our countries and to develop our economies.

The international community has always recognized this need and sought to address water-related challenges faced by millions in the world. As early as 1992 through the Earth Summit in Rio right through to the Millennium Development Goals, pledges have been made to increase access to safe drinking water, lessen the burden of the affordability of water, curb the mismanagement of water resources, and improve sanitation and hygiene levels. While some gains have been made in this regard, a huge challenge still remains ahead of us.

United Nations member states have in recent years sought to move the international community closer to this ideal by reaffirming the human right to safe drinking water through Resolution 68/157 entitled "The human right to safe drinking water and sanitation". There was acknowledgement through this resolution that improving access to safe drinking water and sanitation has a direct bearing on health, poverty eradication, nutrition, education and development.

The right to safe drinking water and sanitation reinforces the right to an adequate standard of living and mutually feeds into the right to life and human dignity. However, this right will continue to remain elusive for millions especially in developing countries, if water is insufficient, unsafe, inaccessible or unaffordable.

Mr President,

The report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals that was endorsed by the General Assembly Resolution 68/309 as constituting 'the main basis for integrating sustainable development goals into the post-2015 development agenda' has proposed a stand-alone goal on water. The goal "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all" not only calls for access to safe and affordable drinking water. It also calls for the improvement of the quality of water by reducing pollution and eliminating the dumping of waste and chemical materials; increasing recycling and water use efficiency. Attaining the water related sustainable development goal would also include implementing "integrated water resources management at all levels, including through trans-boundary cooperation as appropriate" and protecting water related ecosystems.

What is evident in both the MDGs and the SDGs is that water is intrinsically linked to the attainment of the other goals - the eradication of poverty and hunger; the promotion of sustainable agriculture; ensuring health; access to sustainable energy; economic growth; industrialization; combating climate change; sustainable consumption and production; terrestrial ecosystems and combating desertification.

There has therefore been some considerable effort to improve access to water precisely because of this perceived linkage with poverty, health, nutrition, education, gender equality and economic growth.

Mr President,

It is the Group's considered view that any effort aimed at improving access to safe drinking water and sanitation and better management of water resources needs to be informed by the recognition that the need is highest in developing countries where access to safe drinking water is not there. It should also be borne in mind that the need for better infrastructure to ensure access to safe drinking water is greatest in developing countries.

The Group is therefore fully supportive of sustainable development goal 6 which calls for the expansion of "international cooperation and capacity building support to developing countries in water and sanitation related activities and programmes". Towards this end, support to developing countries should be geared to achieving, among others, water management; the protection of coastlines, oceans and seas; the protection of marine resources; and chemical and waste management.

Capacity building should also include a sharing of technologies, experiences and best practices on the effective use of water, not only as a basic necessity but also as an energy source. Support should be provided to developing countries in their efforts to improve the development and deployment of clean technologies, management, conservation, and sustainable use of water and water-related energy resources.

International partners could also increase investments for activities targeted at developing facilities for providing access to fresh water and sanitation and strengthening national and regional water management systems

In conclusion, Mr President,

Our work towards the Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa and the Post-2015 Development Agenda should be informed by the vision of bringing to reality for millions of our people the right to access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene.

I thank you!