



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ABDULLAH M. ALSAIDI, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN TO THE UNITED NATIONS, CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (New York, 3 May 2010)

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates

1. It is my pleasure to address the 18th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD18) on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

2. The 18th session of CSD is taking place at a crucial time as we are preparing for various high level meetings that will take place in September, including the High Level Plenary Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals, the High-Level Review of the Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, and the high-level event on biodiversity.

3. This session provides us with the opportunity to review the progress we have made in the areas of Transport, Chemicals, Waste management, Mining, and A 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns. It also allows us to identify challenges and obstacles we have encountered in these areas, in preparation for the policy discussions during CSD19.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Transport is a central component of sustainable development. Adequate and affordable transportation networks empower people to move freely, communicate and exchange goods and services. In order to achieve the internationally agreed development goals (IADGs) and eradicate poverty, it is necessary to expand the transport infrastructure and transport services in developing countries. New challenges have impacted the development of the transport sector: the global financial crisis, which has led to reduction of financing for infrastructure development in many developing countries; the demand for transport services has been negatively affected by the economic downturn; increased volatility in global energy markets, driven by speculation in the markets. To these are added the need to respond to pollution and climate change and to respect local social and environmental conditions where transport projects are implemented.

5. In addressing these constraints, policies should respond to national priorities and circumstances. We should continue to aim towards providing safe, affordable and efficient transportation, increasing energy efficiency, reducing pollution, congestion and adverse health effects and limiting urban sprawl. In rural areas, the expansion of all-weather road networks is of paramount importance. Likewise, multi-modal approaches to transit, particularly in urban regions, are required. Bus-rapid transit systems offer interesting examples of how to improve coverage and affordability. Support to alternative modes, such as cycling and pedestrianization, should also be highlighted. Concerns with reducing pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and health should inform

decisions to improve fuel quality and foster the uptake of other fuel technology, such as natural gas and biofuels. Different countries will use different models for the development of their transport infrastructure, but common to all is the key role governments play in these processes.

Mr. Chairman

6. Significant progress has been made towards attaining 2020 goal since Johannesburg Plan of Action on Chemicals. As you are all aware, agenda 21 revolves around main issues that includes but not limited to ensuring better survival, and sustainable use of resources.

7. However, we are concerned that in developing countries, more remains to be done to ensure environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals, within the principles of sustainable development and improved quality of life for humankind. The G77 believe that two of the major problems, particularly in developing countries, are (a) lack of sufficient scientific information for the assessment of risks entailed by the use of a great number of chemicals, and (b) lack of resources for assessment of chemicals for which data are at hand as well as inadequate human resources capacity. We look forward to very intensive discussions in this subject matter.

8. Chemical contamination has serious damage to human health, genetic structures and reproductive outcomes, and the environment, and has in recent times been continuing within some of the world's most important industrial areas of which restoration will require major investment and development of new techniques. The long-range effects of pollution in developing countries, extending even to the fundamental chemical and physical processes of the Earth's atmosphere and climate, are threatening the group stresses for the need to undertake concerted activities to reduce risks from toxic chemicals, taking into account the entire life cycle of the chemicals. These activities could encompass both regulatory and non-regulatory measures.

9. The group emphasizes that increased coordination of United Nations bodies and other international organizations, involved in chemicals assessment and management, should be further promoted. In many developing countries work programmes for the promotion of chemical safety are inadequate. Such work has international implications, as chemical risks do not respect national boundaries. However, a significant strengthening of both national and international efforts is needed to achieve an environmentally sound management of chemicals.

10. Furthermore we would like to highlight the importance of the process of synergies among the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions as a concrete example to increase coherence and coordination in this area. However, this process should not conclude in reducing the financial support for each of the Conventions. Technical and financial constraints have delayed the implementation of the chemicals agreements and in this regard these challenges should be taken into account in this process in order to achieve a successful outcome.

11. The group recognizes the important role played by the Regional Centers, particularly in the implementation of the international commitments and in the area of technology transfer and in this regard emphasizes the need of a sustainable financing mechanism for those centers in order to allow the effective implementation of the commitments of the chemical conventions in developing countries at regional and subregional level.

12. The broadest possible awareness of chemical risks is a prerequisite for achieving chemical safety the group believe that the principle of the right of the community and workers to know those risks should be recognized. The industry initiative on responsible care and product stewardship should be developed and promoted. Industry should apply adequate standards of operation with

strong environmental considerations in all countries in order not to damage human health and the environment.

Mr. Chairman,

13. The issue of waste management was highlighted through Agenda 21 is importance maintaining the quality of the Earth's environment. Its relevance to the global endeavors to eradicate poverty and achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development is well recognized. Despite, the progress made by developing countries towards the implementation of Johannesburg Programme of implementation (JPOI) targets 22 and 23, the ineffective and inefficient waste management still resulting in adverse impacts on health of surrounding communities as well as local environment, in terms of pollution of land, water and air are becoming more acute. In this regard, the effective and environmentally sound waste management requires immediate attention particularly in developing countries. The G77 and China is also of the view that adequate priority should be accorded to waste management programmes, in particular the management of hazardous wastes, in national development policies and programmes, including the development of appropriate waste management infrastructure.

14. It is no secret that the waste management is a costly problem and one that pits the limited resources of developing countries against their development goals. Meeting the financial demands of waste management will continue to be a problem in the cities of developing countries. For most developing countries are suffering from poor waste monitoring and need greater access to finance scientific information and technical know-how.

15. The Group has expressed its deep concern about the continuing, and in many cases worsening, multiple social, economic and environmental challenges that confront developing countries, in particular the electronic waste. Thousands of old electronic goods leave the developed countries for the developing countries every day, to be dumped in countries where no facilities exist for safe recycling. The G77 and China believes that the urgent and effective implementation of the Basel Convention [on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal], will be a good measure to judge our seriousness in translating our commitments into action and preventing this unsustainable and equitable trade.

Mr. Chairman,

16. Mining industries are very important to many countries in particular developing countries. Mining, minerals and metals are important for the economic and social development of many countries. Minerals are essential for modern life. It is paramount that developing countries assert the implementation of the their sovereign rights over national resources by the way of strengthening institutional frameworks to prevent environmental and social impacts derived from mining. At the same time there should be a balance between the access to foreign international investment and national revenues collected from mining.

17. From the supply side, many developing countries' governments have taken corrective measures in the mining sector, and have started initiatives, or joint initiatives to ensure greater transparency, particularly in the revenue accrued from the mining industry.

18. However, enhancing transparency should not be limited and confined to the supply side. It is necessary also for the demand side or mining companies to enhance, and promote transparency, accountability and responsibility to local people developing countries' governments have therefore established more stringent measures for that purpose. A stricter policy on social and environmental

standards needs to be permanently enforced. It is the responsibility of the private mining sector to abide by the rules in order to avoid overexploitation of mineral of mineral resources.

19. Transparency and accountability are objectives that should be embraced and promoted by all Member States, regardless of their size, level of development or resource endowment., including the equity and transparency in the financial, monetary and trading systems, as well as its commitment to open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral trading and financial systems.

20. There needs to be a more balanced approach in terms of supply and demand. For the Group of 77 countries, we consider the balance between supply and demand, particularly in terms of transparency, to be indispensable if sustainable development is to be promoted in our countries.

21. It is hoped that CSD-18 could help identify common features of good practices on mining from both sides, to strengthen that every State shall freely exercise full permanent sovereignty over all its wealth, natural resources and economic activities which at the end should contribute to poverty alleviation and economic growth through among others, the promotion of good governance and sustainable development. This is an objective that CSD-18 should further advance, among others during the multi-stakeholders dialogue.

Mr. Chairman,

22. All countries need to produce the goods and services necessary to satisfy the fundamental needs of their populations, but by no means can they continue to follow the path of development that has led the richest countries to have an ecological footprint five times bigger than what the planet is able to support many developing countries continue to be caught in the poverty trap. These countries face numerous challenges and are at the same time struggling to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is therefore important that measures to delink growth from environmental degradation take into account these gaps and the need to protect gains made by developing countries, particularly the most vulnerable. As developed countries' economies continue to be based on resource-intensive consumption and production patterns and as meeting the MDGs requires production and consumption of more goods and services to meet the basic needs of the poor, it is also essential that we address both issues within the limits of our already stressed natural systems.

Mr. Chairman,

23. This year is a very important year for SIDS. We are at the five-year mark since the adoption of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI). As mandated by resolution 62/191, we will undertake a review of progress made in addressing the vulnerabilities of small island developing states (SIDS) through the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy (MSI) during the 65th session of the UNGA. The upcoming SIDS Day, which will serve as the Preparatory Committee (Prepcom) for the High-level review, is a critical component of this undertaking. We therefore look forward to a fruitful and productive session during SIDS Day next week.

24. The Secretary-General's report has rightly painted SIDS as among the world's "hotspots" in terms of sustainable development. The challenges confronted by developing countries at large, are for the most part, amplified in SIDS. Their small size, vulnerability to external shocks and natural disasters, commodity dependence and heavy reliance on imports are but a few characteristics of SIDS. The Group is therefore grateful for the opportunity provided by the Commission on Sustainable Development, as mandated at its thirteenth session, to assess the status of

implementation of the MSI with a particular focus on the themes under consideration in the current implementation cycle. In relation to the thematic cluster currently under consideration, we look forward to rich and thorough discussions in the coming days on how SIDS have fared. The Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) as well as SIDS in their national capacities will provide useful perspectives in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

25. The CSD 18 themes require developing countries to broaden and to strengthen the sustainable development agenda. The multiple and interrelated crisis, particularly food security, climate change, the global economic and financial crisis has seriously challenged our capacity to respond and to prevent these crises from escalating further. In this regard, urged development partners to implementing their part of the commitments whether in external debt, development assistance, financing, trade, technology transfer and greater technology transfer, increased capacity building and additional and predictable financial resources represent the three essential tools for implementation. In building resilience to these interlocking crises, developing countries will need more than ever, a strong UN capable of delivering not only short-term assistance, but also long-term support that strengthens their national efforts for sustainable development. The value added of CSD is that it looks at the balance and integration of the three pillars of development: social, economic and environmental, it is in this framework that we must continue to analyze the themes under discussion and build a comprehensive assessment for effective implementation in the field.

Mr. Chairman,

26. The Group reiterates the importance of taking further effective measure to remove obstacle for people living under foreign occupation, which continue to adversely affect their social development and are incompatible with the dignity and worth of human persons.

I thank you.