



STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. RATU INOKE KUBUABOLA, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS & INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI, CHAIR OF THE 37TH ANNUAL MEETING OF MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE GROUP OF 77 (New York, 26 September 2013)

Your Excellency, President of the General Assembly, Mr John Ashe,
Your Excellency, Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr Ban Ki-moon,
Executive Secretary of the Group of 77, Mr. Mourad Ahmia,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I have the great pleasure of welcoming you all to this 37th Ministerial Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the Group of 77 and China. May I thank you, Secretary-General for your presence, and your words to us in due course. A special welcome to the President of the 68th Session of the General Assembly, His Excellency, Mr John Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda. Excellency, we have complete faith in your leadership of what will no doubt be a seminal year in articulating the UN agenda going forward, and I pledge the Group's support to you and the Secretary-General in all your endeavours.
2. Your Excellencies, Fiji took on the responsibility of chairing the G77 last January, fully cognizant of the heavy duties involved in leading the largest group of countries in the United Nations. In doing so, we have set ourselves a firm discipline of carrying this responsibility in a scrupulous and professional manner in the best collective interests of the Group.
3. 2013 has been a year of consolidation, follow-up, and preparation for major events to come. After the Rio +20 Conference of 2012, during which the Group was ably led by our predecessors Algeria, there were various follow-up processes launched. These have formed the bulk of the inter-governmental work for the Group in the area of sustainable development. This has included the establishment and holding of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, the negotiations to establish a High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development to replace the Commission on Sustainable Development and the establishment of the Experts Working Group on Financing for Sustainable Development.
4. This year has also seen related mandates being implemented, in which processes the G77 and China have been diligently involved. I make special mention of the long preparations for yesterday's event, namely the Special Event to follow up efforts towards achieving the MDGs, and the recently concluded work on the Review of Resolution 61/16 on ECOSOC Reform.
5. On the Special Event on the MDGs, the Group played an instrumental role in securing an inter-governmentally negotiated outcome document which calls for the renewal of political commitment towards achieving the MDGs by 2015. Importantly, the outcomes document reiterates all the Rio values and principles, particularly the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) as a guiding principle for sustainable development. Moreover, the outcome document provides us with a clear roadmap for the launching of an inter-governmental process in the crafting of the post-2015 development agenda.

6. In all these processes, our Group has defended and advanced its interests in the most constructive manner possible. I take this opportunity to thank all delegations for their constructive, patient and active participation through all the long days and late nights of negotiations. All these efforts set the stage as per the apt theme set for the current General Assembly session by the President of the General Assembly, for we are indeed setting the stage for the post-2015 development agenda.

7. The Group has much to be proud of in what it has achieved thus far this year. In the area of sustainable development, we have defended the principle of the primacy of open inter-governmental negotiations, and we have worked hard to ensure concrete and action-oriented developmental results from all these processes. This work by the Group will feed into the inter-governmental processes planned to elaborate the post-2015 development agenda.

Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

8. In the area of South-South cooperation, so fundamental to our Group, Fiji's Prime Minister convened a High Level Panel of Eminent Personalities of the South to examine the Future Landscape of South-South Cooperation, as a means of further developing the Development Platform for the South. The report of this panel's work is before you today for your endorsement. The Panel of Eminent Personalities examined the support to South-South cooperation across the UN system, and looked at trends in South-South Cooperation. They stressed that the existing international development architecture will fall short of helping to realize the potential of South-South cooperation, and that adequate and structured financial and institutional support will be required.

9. Furthermore, the Panel reiterated that, South-South cooperation deserves its own separate and independent promotion and requires deep reflection on ways and means for the Group of 77 to lead in a transforming process towards promoting South-South cooperation. In this context, the Panel made several key strategic recommendations, including the following:

First: promoting and articulating the urgent need for the South to build its own global and multilateral South-South cooperation architecture governed by the South's own system of values and policy frameworks guided by individuals and common objectives and solidarity, respect for national sovereignty and national leadership, equal partnership, mutual benefit and free from any policy conditionality.

Second: Transforming the current UN legislative body on South-South cooperation, the General Assembly High Level Committee for the South-South Cooperation into an effective and more responsive standing mechanism. In this context, the Panel suggested that consideration should be given to the General Assembly High Level Committee being transformed into a fully functioning United Nations Commission on South-South Cooperation.

Third: Upgrading the existing multilateral institutional arrangements for South-South cooperation by transforming the current UN Office for South-South Cooperation into a UN Agency for South-South Cooperation similar to UN Women.

Fourth: Transforming the existing United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation into a fully functioning voluntary trust fund, and expanding the core resources of the G-77 Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation to enable it to support major strategic initiatives in addition

to small scale technical projects.

10. The Panel made the point that has been repeatedly made by the Group in addressing operational activities for development in the UN system, that South-South cooperation must be explicitly incorporated into the operational programs of all relevant bodies of the UN. The Group has worked through its Members on the Executive Boards of funds and programmes to ensure that South-South cooperation now features as a specific outcome for UNDP's work in its Strategic Plan for 2014-2017.

Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

11. The Group was very active earlier this year in addressing questions arising from the long-standing problems relating to troop costs reimbursement rates and associated issues. In the long-term interest of UN peacekeeping, and the objective of having efficient peacekeeping missions that serve the countries which host them, and with a view to allowing those countries to move towards taking control of their own developmental aspirations, it was necessary for the Group and the wider UN membership to take hard decisions that protected the interests of all concerned. In this process it was necessary for the Group to be involved in a vigilant manner for most of the TCCs come from our Group, and the countries in which peacekeeping missions are active are also within our Group. We must continue to build on the passing of General Assembly resolution 67/261 this year, to ensure that TCCs receive the long overdue increase in troop cost reimbursement rates, to ensure that the service of our troops is given the value it deserves, while also ensuring that the efficiency of UN peacekeeping operations is equally maintained.

12. As developing countries, we continue to suffer from the adverse impacts of climate change and the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. In our preparations for the 19th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC that will be held in Warsaw, Poland in November, we need to intensify our efforts to address in an urgent and concrete manner the root causes of climate change. I urge us all to continue to work together in the climate change negotiations and achieve results that will benefit our people and the generations to come.

Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

13. In the months ahead, we have further challenges to address - not least of which will be addressing the budget of the UN for the biennium 2014-2015, the ongoing work on the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda, and the Warsaw Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC. In this, and in the areas of sustainable development, climate change, South-South cooperation and other economic and social issues which form the agenda of the G77, our successes will result from coordinated and united approaches. Our strength is our unity, and it is our strength that allows us to advance the interests of the developing world with credibility and equity. I take this opportunity to assure you again of Fiji's complete commitment to carrying out its responsibilities as the Chair of the Group of 77 in a just and steadfast manner.

14. All that remains for me is to thank all Member States, the Executive Secretary Mr. Mourad Ahmia and his competent team, for their valuable support to Fiji's chairmanship this year. Your support has ensured that we have been able to best defend and advance the interests of our Group. We look forward to the continuation of this support as we head into the busy first quarter of

