



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. MR. VIRACHAI PLASAI, AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE FIFTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ON AGENDA ITEM 3 (A) RETHINKING AND STRENGTHENING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD (New York, 3 February 2016)

Mr. Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. At the outset, allow me to extend our Group's warmest congratulations to you, Chair, and members of your Bureau on your election to the respective positions at this 54th Commission for Social Development. The Group of 77 and China assures you of our full support and cooperation towards the successful conclusion of this very important Session of the Commission.
2. I would also like to express the Group's appreciation to the Secretary-General for the submission of reports to this Session of the Commission, which will certainly help to enrich our deliberations in the week ahead.

Mr. Chair,

3. This Commission is the first functional Commission of ECOSOC to embark on its work in the New Year after the formal adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. So it is a critical year for many reasons. For the CSocD in particular, we are "Rethinking and Strengthening Social Development in the Contemporary World" against the backdrop of efforts underway to implement and concretize the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is a golden opportunity to deliberate on how the international community can reinvigorate all pending commitments made in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, while the international community embarks on an integrated, ambitious and impactful sustainable development agenda. There is a clear sense of urgency in achieving the required transformative change. We will need the highest level of commitment to have better discussions and outcomes within the Commission, in order to strengthen social development and reach the universal goals and commitments we have agreed upon.
4. In this regard, Mr. Chair, the Group of 77 and China would like to underline, once again, the importance of the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen, from 6 to 12 March 1995, and welcome the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the World Summit that took place last year in the 53rd session of the Commission for Social Development, in the Economic and Social Council and in the General Assembly.

Mr. Chair,

5. Poverty eradication, one of the three interrelated pillars of the Copenhagen Declaration, continues to be a major challenge for the international community. Recent figures portray a slight decrease in the number of people living in extreme poverty worldwide, but these gains are fragile

and sporadic. The simple fact that hundreds of millions of people across the world remain in extreme poverty is unacceptable and therefore needs immediate action. The Group of 77 and China is also deeply concerned about the uneven progress achieved in fulfilling all of the interrelated commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development. Conflict, slowing global economic growth, volatile financial markets, high rates of youth unemployment, the growing impact of climate change and other challenges present a complex myriad of obstacles to sustaining any gains we have seen thus far in an irreversible manner. The Group of 77 and China continues to see an important role for the Commission to play in meeting these challenges in order to achieve and sustain progress in social development.

Mr. Chair,

6. The Group of 77 and China is acutely aware that poverty, in all its forms and dimensions, unemployment, income inequalities and social disintegration are complex issues. They must be addressed through a comprehensive and coherent set of economic, environmental, social development and social protection investments and policies. Furthermore, people must be empowered through broad-based, inclusive policies and participatory government mechanisms. People and communities must build, through these investments, policies and mechanisms, a self-reliance that is sustainable.

7. Governments must ensure that macroeconomic and social policies focus on job creation and social protection to reduce inequalities. Investments must be made in infrastructure, basic services and education, among other important areas. All efforts must continue to be exerted to ensure that all segments of society, including youth, the elderly, women, migrants and persons with disabilities, enjoy equal access to resources and opportunities.

8. At the same time, global partnerships must be heightened to a new level. As the Secretary-General clearly posits, "strengthening social development will also require scaled-up and more effective international support, including through enhanced Official Development Assistance, effective international cooperation and coherent and mutually reinforcing global trade, monetary and financial systems." Rightly so, the Group of 77 and China is of the view that indeed, international cooperation must be enhanced, while internationally agreed commitments to render official development assistance must be fulfilled, be they technical or financial, including debt relief, greater market access, capacity building, and technology transfer.

Mr. Chair,

9. The Group of 77 and China continues to welcome the work of the Commission on the various social groups: family, ageing, youth and persons with disabilities, as well as the review of their respective programmes of action. This emphasis is critical to our efforts in realizing social integration for all and monitoring and reviewing progress in this regard continues to be key. The Group also welcomes the Commission's continued focus on the social dimension of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, noting critically that Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for half of the global poor.

10. The Group of 77 and China would also like to stress, once again, the importance of removing obstacles to the realization of the right of peoples to self-determination, in particular of peoples living under colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation, with full respect of national sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States, which adversely affect their social and economic development.

Mr. Chair,

11. It is at this critical juncture, that we must demand more of ourselves. We must aim higher. As such, the Group reaffirms its steadfast commitment to the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Summit for Social Development over two decades ago. And we continue to exert our utmost efforts at the national level and to seek global partnership to fulfill our shared aspirations.

Mr. Chair,

12. The Group of 77 and China is keenly aware that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires us to do more. Therefore we must rethink and reenergize our deliberations for this Session on how we can do more to strengthen the social dimension of sustainable development. Together, we must build resilient, productive and inclusive communities for all so that the aim of poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all becomes an achievable reality.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.

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