



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. AMBASSADOR PETER THOMSON, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FIJI TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE 51ST SESSION OF THE COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (New York, 6 February 2013)

Madam Chair,
Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. At the outset, please allow me to extend our Group's warmest congratulations and welcome, to you as Chair of the 51st session of the Commission for Social Development and to the members of your Bureau. The Group of 77 assures you of its full support and cooperation this session.

2. The Group of 77 recognises that over the last decade, the Commission has made critical contributions and progress in guiding social policy to open opportunities for those who would otherwise be marginalised. The participation of the otherwise marginalised, through the formulation of inclusive social policies has allowed the creation, achievement and maintenance of social and political stability, as well as contributing to a favourable environment for economic growth. However, despite this progress, we are still faced with continuing and emerging challenges which require the Commission's attention in order to support national efforts.

Madam Chair,

3. With only two more years remaining within the MDG Framework, eradicating poverty remains the greatest challenge being faced by the world. Far from having eradicated poverty, the global economic and financial crisis has only compounded the problem. Although economic opportunities are expanding in developing countries, the gap between rich and poor is increasing rather than decreasing. Such situations place pressure on national policy-making instruments, and on global programmes of support within the UN ambit, often at the cost of sectoral policies addressing the situation of vulnerable and marginalised groups. The Group of 77 and China supports all efforts that are directed towards achieving our commitment targets set by our leaders for the poor and most vulnerable, and to ensure that their needs are not forgotten.

4. This session's priority theme: "Promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all" is aptly chosen. The Group believes that focusing on this area will ensure that social policies will be maintained at the core of international development with an enhanced action-oriented policy outcome on the three key pillars of sustainable development. An enabling environment that expands choices and enables empowered participation in decision making is crucial. The Group of 77 calls for synergy between empowerment policies on the one hand and the ongoing work on the social pillar of the Rio+20 Outcomes and developing the post - 2015 goals on the other.

Madam Chair,

5. Macroeconomic and social policies should prioritise the creation of full employment and decent work for all. Such economically empowering policies will provide the framework to allow the poor and most vulnerable to utilise their skills and talents as a means to escape the vicious cycle of

poverty.

6. The Group of 77 stresses that strengthening of the social capital that exists in poor communities has to be adequately addressed. These formal and informal networks and strategies upon which the poor and most vulnerable group base their livelihoods include indigenous knowledge and practices that most communities have used as survival strategies for many generations. The Group emphasizes the urgency for an inclusive and participatory social research method to ensure that commercialisation of indigenous knowledge and practices is fairly and equitably compensated.

7. The Group of 77 stresses the need to further mainstream sustainable development at all levels, integrating economic, social, and environmental aspects and recognising their inter-linkages, so as to achieve sustainable development in all its dimensions.

Madam Chair,

8. The Group welcomes the continued focus placed on the various social groups: family, ageing, youth and persons with disabilities, and the review of the programmes of action pertaining to their situations. In the programme of work for the biennium 2014 - 2015 and beyond, social groups should remain as an integral part of the Commission's annual agenda and be aligned with specified timelines.

9. The preparation for and observance of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family in 2014 will provide a useful opportunity to draw attention to family-focused policies as part of our development efforts. In this context, the Group of 77 recognises the importance of establishing partnerships with civil society organisations, private sector and academic institutions in support of family-oriented policy and programmes, including preparations for the International Year of the Family.

10. The Group of 77 reiterates the commitments made for meeting the special needs of Africa at the 2005 World Summit. The Group requests the Commission for Social Development to continue to give due prominence in its work to the social dimensions of the New Partnerships for Africa's Development.

Madam Chair,

11. The Group underscores the need for a strengthened and scaled-up global partnership for eradication of poverty, based on the recognition of national leadership and ownership of development strategies. International cooperation must be enhanced, including fulfilment of commitments of internationally agreed official development assistance, debt relief, market access, capacity building and technical support, including technology transfer.

12. The Group of 77 firmly believes that alleviation of poverty requires a development-oriented strategy focused on building rural infrastructure, bolstering income and basic services such as medical care and insurance and investment in education. It is essential to increase efforts to ensure that all segments of society, including youth, elderly and persons with disability have access to resources and opportunities.

13. The Group of 77 would like to stress, once again, the importance of removing obstacles to the realisation of the right of peoples to self-determination, in particular of peoples living under colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation, which adversely affect their social and economic development.

Madam Chair,

14. In conclusion, the Group of 77 hopes that this session will provide a productive outcome that contributes to the promotion and empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all.

I thank you.

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