



REMARKS 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, CHAIR OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT A PLENARY MEETING OF THE ECOSOC ON ECOSOC 2016 SESSION (New York, 19 February 2016)

Mr. President,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. The Group of 77 and China would like to thank the President of the Economic and Social Council and Permanent Representative of Republic of Korea to the United Nations, for convening today's meeting to consider the working arrangements of the 2016 sessions of the Council.

Mr. President,

3. The Group of 77 and China wishes to express our support for the Presidency's proposals, contained in documents E/2016/L.7 and E/2016/L.8 on the dates of the humanitarian affairs segment and multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals to be held during 27-29 June 2016 and 6-7 June 2016 accordingly. Moreover, we support the proposed theme for the integration segment of the 2016 session of the ECOSOC: "Implementing the 2030 Agenda through policy innovation and integration" as contained in document E/2016/L.4/Rev.1.
4. We would like to take this opportunity to convey our views for the remaining arrangements for ECOSOC 2016 session as follows:
5. First, the Group feels that the issue of international cooperation on taxation is of key importance and was one of the main decisions of the Addis Ababa Conference. The implementation of the decision contained in paragraph 29 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda must be faithful to its provisions.
6. We therefore would like to support the Council's original proposal to hold the 12th session of Committee of the Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters back to back to the special meeting of the Council on International Cooperation on Tax Matters at the UN Headquarters in New York.
7. We firmly believe that this proposal confirms the purpose of paragraph 29 of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda that QUOTE "We will increase the engagement of the Committee with the ECOSOC through the special meeting on international cooperation on tax matters, with a view to enhancing intergovernmental consideration of tax issues" UNQUOTE. This vision can only be operationalized if at least one meeting of the Committee takes place in New York back to back with the ECOSOC special meeting on tax matters.
8. Furthermore, this proposal takes into consideration fiscal responsibility and cost-effectiveness for the Council. If the Committee continues to meet in Geneva, the Secretariat of the Committee will have to travel to Geneva twice, incurring avoidable expenditure. Moreover, in case both meetings of the Committee are held in Geneva, in order to fulfill the mandate of the Addis Agenda, the Committee experts would have to travel to New York for the third time to engage with the ECOSOC

Special Committee as envisaged in paragraph 29 of the Addis Ababa outcome.

9. Second, we fully support the proposed duration and the theme of the FfD forum, while cautioning against its overlap with other important meetings which may detract from effective participation in it. Taking into consideration the schedule for the PGA's High Level Thematic Debate on Achieving the SDGs, the signing event of the Paris Agreement and the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on the World Drug Problem during the proposed period, the FfD Forum could be held during 14-15 April and be continued on 18-20 April. While this would mean that the session will be spread across the weekend, this will enable a more thorough and useful discussions spread over five days.

10. We view that a 5 days inaugural meeting reflects our strong determination to have in-depth discussions on the implementation and follow-up of the financing for development outcomes and means of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in this very first year after their historical adoption. In this regard, we would like to ask the Presidency to propose a concept note, modalities and programme by reflecting essential and substantive elements of this important meeting as a basis for further consideration.

Mr. President,

11. In our third point, we wish to express our full support for the theme of 2016 thematic discussion on "Infrastructure for sustainable development" proposed by the Council. We view infrastructure as a cross-cutting means to achieve the SDGs. Thus, we cannot overemphasize the importance to have this important intergovernmental discussion at the ECOSOC high-level segment.

12. We further stress that the proposed theme for the thematic debate is in line with paragraph 6 of annex to the Resolution 68/1 that QUOTE "the ECOSOC needs a strengthened issues-based approach to enhance its lead role in identifying emerging challenges and promoting reflection debate and innovative thinking, as well as in achieving a balanced integration of the three dimension of the sustainable development." UNQUOTE, and also paragraph 19 that QUOTE "the ECOSOC should devote time to the specific needs of countries in special situations, namely LDC, LLDCs, SIDS and Africa and integrate their concerns into all segments as cross-cutting priorities. It will continue to address the particular development challenges of middle-income countries" UNQUOTE.

Mr. President,

13. While we express our full support to the proposed theme for High-Level-Political Forum on "Ensuring that no one is left behind", we wish to further underscore the universal character of the High-Level-Political Forum and the FfD Forum follow-up by reflecting in the decisions that this year's themes do not set a precedent for and are without prejudice to decisions regarding themes for future meetings of the forums.

Mr. President,

14. The Group of 77 and China wishes to express our sincere appreciation for the efforts of the Presidency of ECOSOC in facilitating the discussions on the working arrangements and also wish to reiterate the Group of 77 and China's support for the Presidency in this endeavour.

15. We wish to reaffirm our readiness to work with our Partners in reaching agreeable solutions for the remaining working arrangements for 2016 session. In this regard, we call on all sides to also exercise their utmost flexibility in a spirit of cooperation. We are fully confident that ECOSOC will be

able to maintain its tradition of consensus building and inclusiveness and reach mutually acceptable agreements on the outstanding issues as early as possible.

I thank you.

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