



**OPENING REMARKS BY H.E. AMBASSADOR PETER THOMSON,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FIJI TO THE UNITED NATIONS,  
CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE G77 BRAINSTORMING  
SESSION ON THE FOLLOW-UP OF RIO + 20: THE WAY FORWARD (New  
York, 25 February 2013)**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I wish to welcome all of you to this important brainstorming session of the Group of 77 and China on the follow up of Rio+20. I acknowledge the presence of our guests who have been kind to accept our invitation to participate in this brainstorming exercise. On your behalf, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to our distinguished guests and also express the Group's deepest appreciation for their support and we look forward to their valuable contribution.
2. As reflected in today's Agenda, there are three key issues that will be addressed at this brainstorming session. I underscore at the outset that as a Group, our primary goal in this exercise is to assist the General Assembly to successfully and expeditiously launch the follow-up mechanisms agreed on in the Rio +20 Conference held in June 2012.
3. Our objective is to reinvigorate the political will that is required for a renewed commitment to global cooperation and solidarity.
4. Let me also stress a number of issues regarding this process. The G77 must play an important role in this process as we represent the largest membership of the UN. It goes without saying the Group must maintain unity and solidarity, and adopt a constructive, proactive approach.
5. The issue of sustainable development emerges from the G77 and therefore the G77 should assume a leadership role, particularly if we are to take upon ourselves a larger agenda, defending the fact that poverty eradication continues to be the major change facing the world today.
6. Most of our Group members have expressed the view that this is an intergovernmental process; therefore, all Working Groups for various processes should be open-ended and transparent in order to enable and ensure the participation of all developing countries. .
7. I respectfully submit that the G77 core interest issues such as Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR), national ownership, and the efforts centering on poverty eradication, should be fundamental in this process. Negotiations on the SDGs should be always in the context of poverty eradication as the basis for formulating the goals.
8. In addition to the foregoing, Member States representation in the bureau should be regionally balanced. As for NGOs and civil society, their participation in this process should be as stakeholders according to the provisions made by the General Assembly.
9. We have stressed that the High Level Political Forum must be a universal, intergovernmental, high level, which shall follow up on the implementation of sustainable development, as well as enhance the integration of its three dimensions.

10. I invite members to comment on the linkage between the topics of discussion today and the Special Event on the MDGs that is scheduled for September. This is necessary since we are not simply seeking to fulfill the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 but we are looking beyond 2015.

11. In keeping with the purpose of our brainstorming session and to make it as interactive as possible, I wish to pose a few questions intended to provoke thoughts and responses during the course of our discussion today.

- How do we make the Special Event on the MDGs meaningful to the post-2015 development agenda?
- With the benefit of the lessons learnt from the 15-year long MDGs, how long should the post-2015 development agenda be for?
- What are the components of the post-2015 development agenda? Are they limited to what the High Level Political Forum and the OWG on SDGs produce or are there other aspects and if so, what should those be?

How do we synchronise all the parallel yet interlinked processes currently in place relating to the post-2015 development agenda?

I wish all success to your deliberations.

I thank you.