



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. MR. J. V. BAINIMARAMA, PRIME MINISTER OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI, CHAIR OF THE GROUP OF 77, AT THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (New York, 24 September 2013)

Madam Chair,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. At the outset, I wish to commend the President of the General Assembly for convening this inaugural meeting of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. I also wish to acknowledge the efforts of the Secretariat for the logistical arrangements.

Madam Chair,

3. Last Friday, at the 20th and final session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, we celebrated the legacy of the Commission. While we reflected on the lessons learned from twenty years of the work of the Commission, we also look forward to the rise of the High-level Political Forum, which we firmly believe should be a more vibrant and robust platform, with high-level political visibility, for sustainable development.
4. We all agree that the lessons learned from the Commission on Sustainable Development should be the starting point for giving shape and content to the High-level Political Forum. We must now commit our collective political weight at the highest levels, to give the necessary political guidance to the High-level Political Forum in ensuring its central role within a strengthened institutional framework for sustainable development. The Forum should therefore provide a leadership role to complement the functions and roles of UN bodies, including the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in the field of sustainable development. In this regard, coherence among relevant bodies will be an essential prerequisite.

Madam Chair,

5. The Group of 77 and China holds the view that the High-level Political Forum should provide political leadership to further enhance international cooperation on sustainable development. The Forum should address sustainable development challenges from the prism of poverty eradication as its overarching objective. It should comprehensively implement the Rio+20 mandates and follow-up on the fulfillment of commitments, especially those related to the means of implementation: finance, technology and capacity building. Moreover, the Forum should also coordinate and contribute to the enhanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner at all levels.
6. Building on the strength of its universal character, the High-level Political Forum should take a leading role in designing the United Nations development agenda, including in particular the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda. It is also essential for the High-level Political Forum to be adequately financed to carry out the functions mandated for it by paragraph 85 of the outcome document of the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in all the three dimensions of sustainable development.

7. An important lesson to be retained from the Commission of Sustainable Development experience is for the High-level Political Forum to continue the Commission's openness towards the participation of major groups. Multi-stakeholder dialogues should reflect geographical balance, including think tanks and research institutions from the South, such as the South Centre and the Third World Network, or newly established regional organizations from the developing world such as the Pacific Islands Development Forum. This participatory and inclusive approach to the implementation of sustainable development will make the Forum more effective in advancing the sustainable development agenda. The High-level Political Forum should serve as a conduit for all those voices who wish to be heard, whose perspectives and contributions matter as much as those of policy makers.

Madam Chair,

8. Going forward, we wish to stress the importance for all High-level Political Forum meetings, when convened under the auspices of the General Assembly, to operate under the rules of procedure of the main committees of the General Assembly, as stipulated in resolution 67/290. Adherence to these rules is critical in maintaining the Forum's universal character, which ensures the full and effective participation of all Member States of the United Nations and the States Members of specialised agencies.

9. Today, we bear witness to a historical event. The inaugural meeting of the High-level Political Forum gives us a sense of hope that we will begin anew and embark on a path that would allow us to work together for a better future, one that is free from suffering, poverty and hunger. I trust that today's deliberations will provide a solid base for future sessions of the High-level Political Forum to build on.

Thank you!