



INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR MATHLATSHE MMINELE, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON HARMONY WITH NATURE TO COMMEMORATE INTERNATIONAL MOTHER EARTH DAY (New York, 27 April 2015)

Mr Moderator,

I have the honour of making these brief comments on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Let me begin by expressing, on behalf of the members of the group, profound compassion and condolences for the people and government of Nepal following the massive earthquake that has claimed more than a thousand lives. We hope that the international community rallies around the people of Nepal and assist them as they deal with this tragedy.

The Group would like to express its appreciation to the President of General Assembly for convening this interactive dialogue on "Harmony with nature to commemorate International Mother Earth Day".

In the same vein, the Group is appreciative of the inputs of the panelists on how best humanity can attain a sustainable outlook that equally and in a balanced manner pursues economic, social and environmental development.

Mr Moderator,

Today's exchange of views could not have come at a more opportune moment because there are ongoing important intergovernmental processes this year (2015) which will see several crucial outcomes being crafted and agreed to and which we as developing countries hold can change the tide if the levels of ambition are not compromised:

- In a couple of weeks in May, member states have to come to an agreement on a future International Arrangement on Forests at the Eleventh Session of the UN Forum on Forests;
- In July the Third International Conference on Financing for Development has to come up with concrete and tangible means to support and implement the development efforts of especially developing countries;
- In September our Heads of State and Government are expected to adopt the Post-2015 Development Agenda;
- While in December in Paris at the UNFCCC engagements, the international community is expected to adopt a binding agreement to address the scourge of climate change.

These intergovernmental processes present an opportunity to seriously address the international community's resolve that the only realistic response to environmental degradation is through sustainable development, with its three equally important dimensions.

We would also assert that these intergovernmental processes furthermore present an opportunity to kindle a mutually nourishing relationship between sustainable development and living in harmony with nature.

In conclusion Mr Moderator,

The Group is equally concerned with the documented environmental degradation and the negative impacts on nature resulting from human activity. In this regard, it is worth recalling that unsustainable patterns of consumption and production have an adverse effect on the earth's capacity to sustain life and that these have to be curbed.

The persistence of environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, poverty, hunger, malnutrition, diseases and economic instability requires a response and change of lifestyles that guarantee future generations the best eco-system services that it can offer.

Thank you