



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. MR. PETER THOMSON, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FIJI TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIR OF THE GROUP OF 77, ON THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (New York, 13 December 2013)**

Co-Chairs,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. I would like to acknowledge the addresses by Assistant Secretary-General Simonovich and Dr Lomborg and wish to thank them for those thought-provoking remarks on Human Rights, particularly the emphasis on the urgent need and importance to advance the realisation of the Right to Development. This call for action is timely in a year when the United Nations marks the 25th anniversary of the Universal Declaration on the Right to Development. We are convinced that the Right to Development remains highly relevant today as we discuss the parameters of the SDGs in this Open Working Group, as well as in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda over the coming two years.
3. Rampant poverty and stark inequality, both within and between countries, serve as a constant reminder that the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the fundamental principles of international human rights law it subsequently inspired, as well as the Declaration on the Right to Development remain empty words for far too long and for far too many people, especially those belonging to the developing world. After 25 years of political debate, it is time to move beyond rhetoric. We should seize on this historical juncture at the UN and focus on practical steps to implement the Declaration to ensure that the development agenda beyond 2015 puts people at the centre of the development process with poverty eradication at its core. It is unacceptable that in the 21st century, after decades of technological and scientific advancement, one billion people around the world still live in poverty and still live with malnourishment.
4. In the context of realizing a vision for a transformative global development agenda, the Right to Development principles of equality, non-discrimination, participation, transparency and accountability, international cooperation, as well as respecting self-determination and sovereignty over natural resources are core narratives that guide our collective responses to present, new and emerging development issues and challenges. Such global challenges include poverty eradication, climate change, sustained and inclusive growth, the quest for sustainable development, the stalled multilateral trade negotiations, debt relief, technology transfer, development cooperation, the acceleration on the achievement of the MDGs and the urgent need to reform the international financial institutions.

Co-Chairs,

5. The human rights of individuals, groups and peoples and their effective enjoyment of sustainable development are affected by and dependent on not just their own domestic government policy, but also by the cross-border, or extraterritorial, acts and omissions of States. In this increasingly globalised world, a State's domestic conduct may have extraterritorial effects in other countries. It is important therefore that States have a baseline obligation to 'do no harm' or to respect human rights in other countries. For example, countries should not deregulate speculative trading in food

futures to create more instability in food prices, actions that would jeopardise the financial accessibility of human right to food for the poorest. Similarly, the international intellectual property regime should not put life-saving generic antiretroviral treatment out of reach of the poor.

6. While the private sector is increasingly playing a complementary role in the global partnership for development, it is important to ensure private sector accountability. This means States have a baseline obligation under international law to protect human rights to include proper and effective regulation of transnational corporation behavior to ensure their actions do not violate human rights in third countries.

Co-Chairs,

7. The Group expresses concern that international arrangements for collective decision making have not kept pace with the magnitude and depth of global change. Global governance for sustainable development is mainly based on formal arrangements and treaty-based institutions. Their membership, mandates and institutional machinery do not necessary reflect the realities of the 21 century, thus unable to address many development challenges such as freeing humanity from poverty and hunger or to reduce global economic imbalances and inequalities. Developing countries remain largely under-represented in most key decision-making international institutions. These institutions often fail to accommodate the changing power relations and have not live up to the principles of transparency, accountability and meaningful participation of all stakeholders. In this regard, it is imperative for developing countries to have an increasing voice, representation and voting power in these institutions, particularly the IMF and the World Bank.

8. The Group holds the view that the role of the United Nations in global economic and financial governance is central to the post-2015 development agenda, as the UN is home of the agenda. The UN development system needs to be strengthened to bridge the gap between globally agreed goals and aspirations, and policies at the national level. We are hopeful that a strong High-level Political Forum and a re-invigorated Economic and Social Council would enhance the UN's role as an appropriate forum to discuss global development issues and challenges, including the international economic and financial system and architecture from a broad development perspective. The promotion of sustainable development requires strengthened collective action and international cooperation. The Group of 77 and China believes the UN system must play a central role in this noble endeavour.

I thank you, Co-Chairs.