



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MINISTER CLAUDIO ROSSELL, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PLURINATIONAL STATE OF BOLIVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE EIGHTH SESSION OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: PROMOTING EQUALITY, INCLUDING SOCIAL EQUITY, GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT (New York, 5 February 2014)

Distinguished Co-chairs,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

At the outset, I want to highlight the presence of the keynote speakers, who have shared such insightful information. I thank Dr. Stiglitz and Dr. Mlambo-Ngcuka for that. I also want to highlight the presence of Mr. Lenin Moreno, Secretary General's Special Envoy on Disability and Accessibility in this meeting, who is going to address this audience in this afternoon's panel. Finally, let me thank you once again for the way you have been conducting this eighth session of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

Co-chairs,

Equity is an important ingredient of social cohesion and development. An equitable distribution of income is also important for providing the demand basis for economic growth.

There is widespread concern over the trends of greatly widened inequality between and within countries. In many countries, the share of income of the top 1% to 10% of the population has gone up very significantly, while the share of the bottom 40% has declined greatly and in some countries the incomes of the bottom segments of society have declined or stagnated. Inequality is also, and even more, prevalent. As we all already know, a recent Oxfam report estimates that almost half of the world's wealth is owned by 1% of the population, and the wealth of this one per cent is 65 times the wealth of the bottom half of the world's population. Establishment organizations including the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Economic Forum have also identified inequality as a major global problem to be tackled.

The Group of 77 and China wants to recall that this widening inequality, especially when accompanied by poverty and unemployment, has been a cause of social discontent and protests in many countries, especially those affected by economic crisis.

Reversal of the universal trend of growing income inequality should be also a global goal. This calls for reversing the secular decline in the share of labor income in most countries. For the Group, this goal could be pursued through various means to establish a level playing field between labor and capital, including greater international mobility of labor, regulation of international financial markets and capital movements, more equitable taxation of wage income and incomes from capital and financial assets, prevention of tax competition and a code of conduct for TNCs. Pursuit such a goal calls for breaking the dominance of finance and corporate interest in the formulation of policies and operation of the global markets. No single country alone can do this; it should be pursued collectively at the global level.

One way to address inequality is to put a limit to the wealth and income of the economic elite, for example the moves in some developed countries to curb the bonuses or earnings of top executives, or through taxes on wealth and income. Another method is for the State to provide social protection measures including social benefits and security, including transfer payments to poor families and free or subsidized healthcare, food and other services.

In developing countries, inequality needs be tackled by pursuing policies of inclusive economic growth. This needs to be coupled with enhanced investments in socio-economic infrastructure and human resource development, in particular, education, health, housing and sanitation. Generating full and productive employment and providing access to all sections of the society to economic opportunities also needs to be prioritized. The SDG framework should encourage and support such objectives and policies.

There is a strong case to have a SDG on reducing inequality and adopting social protection policies and measures. Also, this is clearly linked to poverty eradication, which is the central and overarching goal for the Group of 77 and China.

Studies show that income inequality among countries is higher than within countries. There should be international action to reverse the trend and thus to reduce international inequality. Other aspects of international cooperation, namely means of implementation and global partnership for development, should also be agreed on under the goal of reducing inequality.

Co-chairs,

The Rio+20 Summit recognized that persistent social, economic and political inequalities prevented the realization of potential of women to benefit from sustainable development as leaders and change agents. The Outcome of Rio+20, entitled "The future we want", called in paragraphs 236 through 241 for specific targets for increasing women in leadership positions, reforms to give women equal rights, and promote equal access to women and girls to social services.

Whilst there is a gender equality goal in the Millennium Development Goals, MDG3 to be precise, it is widely and commonly agreed that it has not been sufficiently broad or deep enough to deal with the wide variety of challenges facing women in the world. The MDG3 focused on gender parity in education. This does not extend to deal with the multiple and deeply entrenched structural issues of violence, biases and discrimination that women and girls must confront in their social, economic, private and public lives.

The Group of 77 and China believes that nationally determined targets for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment should be considered in these key dimensions: elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against girls and women, promotion of gender equality in the access and ownership of productive resources, assets and opportunity; better and increased participation of women in decision making in political, economic and social spheres; and equal access of all women and girls to education, health and other basic services.

I thank you, Co-chairs.