



INTERVENTION ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY THE PERMANENT MISSION OF EGYPT TO THE UNITED NATIONS, DURING THE ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION OF THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON "TOWARDS A GLOBAL PACT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT", ESTABLISHED BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 72/277 - ITEM 3: GENERAL DISCUSSION (New York, 5 September 2018)

Co-Chairs,

1- I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

2- At the outset, please allow me to congratulate H.E. Amb. Amal Mudallali, Permanent Representative of Lebanon and H.E. Amb. Francisco Antonio Duarte Lopes, Permanent Representative of Portugal on your appointment as co-chairs of the ad hoc open-ended working group on "Towards a Global Pact for the Environment". The Group is looking forward to working closely with you and your respective teams for a smooth conduction of our sessions, and consensual conclusion of our work.

Co-chairs,

1- The Group of 77 and China reaffirm that all principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, including, inter alia, the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities are the basis for developing countries to engage in the process. In addition, the challenges posed by environmental degradation shall be addressed in the framework of sustainable development.

2- As recognized in Op (9) of the GA resolution 72/227, this process should not undermine existing relevant legal instruments and frameworks and relevant global, regional and sectoral bodies. To this end, by no means this process will back track, or dilute any existing commitments or progress achieved by any relevant instruments.

3- In line with the Op (5) of the GA resolution 72/227, the Group will limit its general statement and engagement during the organizational session to address matters of organizational nature of the ad hoc open-ended working group, the duration and number of its substantive sessions.

4- In this connection, the Group of 77 and China is of the view that there is a direct and strong link between the examination of the organizational matters related to the substantive sessions and the submission of the SG report as mandated in operative paragraph (1) of the GA resolution 72/227.

5- The SG report is a prerequisite for holding the substantive sessions of the ad hoc open-ended working group. A thorough examination of its content by the Member States is a critical factor in assisting the membership to make an informative decision on the numbers, and duration of the substantive sessions. Accordingly, as the SG report is yet to be submitted, it would be difficult at this stage to decide on the exact numbers, or set up a fixed duration, and dates for holding the substantive sessions of the ad hoc open-ended working group.

6- The Group of 77 and China, however, suggest the following general guidelines for the organizational matter of the substantive sessions, as follows:

- Number of the substantive sessions could be around three to four sessions, similarly we suggest the duration of the substantive sessions from three up to four days.

- It is important to ensure an adequate time space between convening each substantive session (4 to 5 weeks).
- As outlined in the Op (5/b) of the GA resolution 72/227 the first substantive session to be held at least one month after the submission of the SG report. In light of the above, the convening of the first substantive session to be scheduled at least one month after the submission of the SG report.
- We are of the view that any proposed dates for the substantive sessions should first be checked carefully against the calendar of international conferences or events related to the environment. We should avoid any clashes, and not overextend developing country delegations by requiring them to participate in back-to-back international meetings between Nairobi and another location. Our delegations should have sufficient time in capital to prepare inter-sessionally. Where these international conferences or events are held in Nairobi, such as UNEA-4 in March 2019, the Group supports having the substantive session back-to-back to facilitate the travel arrangements and participation of developing countries.
- We suggest for each substantive session to include an agenda item on the organizational arrangements for the following substantive session, this would allow experts to decide on the dates and duration of the next session in light of the above-mentioned general guidelines.

7- I would like to conclude by reiterating the Group of 77 and China commitment to continue to engage constructively in our discussions, and wish the co-chairs all success in their work.

Thank you.

