



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY MR MAHLATSE MMINELE, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, DURING THE SIXTEENTH MEETING OF THE UNITED NATIONS OPEN-ENDED INFORMAL CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON OCEANS AND THE LAW OF THE SEA (New York, 6 April 2015)

Co Chairs,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of G77 and China.

I would like to start by expressing how happy the Members of the G77 and China are for having you as Co-Chairs of the Sixteenth Meeting of United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process (ICP) on Oceans and the Law of the Sea. We have had the pleasure of working with His Excellency, Ambassador Don Mackay, from New Zealand, for several years, and it is an honour and privilege to welcome His Excellency, Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra, Permanent Representative of Peru, as Co-Chair. We thank you for your spirit of openness and willingness to work with delegations demonstrated prior to and during the preparatory meeting held on 24 February 2015.

We thank the Legal Counsel for his opening remarks on behalf of the Secretary General. We also take this opportunity to recognize the hard work of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea under the leadership of Ms Gabriele Goettsche-Wönli.

We thank the Secretary General for his advanced report which highlights the current state of integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in relation to oceans, as well as opportunities for, and challenges to, the enhanced integration of the three dimensions. In doing so, it draws attention to activities and initiatives undertaken with a view to promoting the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in relation to oceans. We recognize his effort in putting the report together for this meeting. If we did not know the reason why the "advance" format limits its availability to only one of the six United Nations official languages, we would be complaining.

We attach great importance to this meeting. As you may recall, the G77 and China proposed the topic for this ICP meeting which reads "Oceans and sustainable development: integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely, environmental, social and economic", the rationale being that oceans and seas are critical to sustainable development, in particular for coastal developing States and Small Island developing States. We did this with the understanding that this meeting could help oceans and law of the sea experts to better understand the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda. It was not the intention to substitute that process or duplicate discussions but to give us an opportunity to understand more and in depth the characteristics of that process, as we did in the meeting of the ICP prior to the Rio plus 20 Summit.

Even when this ICP meeting is not part of the programme of meetings of the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda, we believe it is important to reiterate some basic points of the position of the G77 and China in that process, because they apply to the whole set of goals and targets and to the future work on the issue, including the development of indicators:

First, the Group has repeatedly indicated we are averse to the re-opening of the Report of the Open Working Group on SDGs. The Report of the SDGs must not be reopened and must be entirely integrated into the post-2015 development agenda including the chapeau, SDGs and targets and reservations made by the Member States.

Second, the Group regards the issue of the Means of Implementation as critically important to the achievement of the post-2015 development agenda. An integral part of the Means of Implementation is technology transfer and development.

Third, regarding the process for the elaboration of indicators, it is important to ensure that channels of communication are established to afford Member States an opportunity to provide inputs to the Statistical Commission as it undertakes this indispensable task of developing global indicators in order to ensure that the process is not only open and transparent but Member States are in a position to provide inputs in the process.

Co-Chairs,

The Group is pleased that you propose an informative session with the Co-Facilitators of the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda. We believe the session could be informative in two ways: first, for delegations to better understand those intergovernmental negotiations; and second, for the co-facilitators to possibly have an interaction with law of the sea experts, in particular in relation to goal 14 and its follow-up. It would also be important that representatives of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs are here not only at the opening of the meeting but also, as observers, at the session with the co-facilitators of the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda. It has been a concern shared by many delegations that in the Secretariat's advice to the co-facilitators, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea is not fully integrated. When advice is needed on oceans and law of the sea issues, there is no doubt that the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea is best positioned than any other part of the Secretariat to advise in order to avoid inaccurate concepts or texts.

Co-Chairs,

The spirit of the ICP as a platform for frank exchange of views is very suitable for the topic we will address at this meeting. The G77 and China is ready to fully engage with delegations and to provide full support to the Co-Chairs.

I thank you for your attention.