



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY H.E. MS. CHULAMANEE CHARTSUWAN, AMBASSADOR AND DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THAILAND TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT AN EVENT TO COMMEMORATE WORLD YOUTH SKILLS DAY (New York, 15 July 2016)**

Mr. Ahmad Alhendawi,  
UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. It is also a distinct pleasure to represent the Group of 77 and China today and join the international community in commemorating World Youth Skills Day. We extend our appreciation to Sri Lanka, Dominican Republic and Portugal for co-hosting this event in partnership with UNESCO, ILO and the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth.

Excellencies,

2. The Group of 77 and China take particular pride in this celebration and reflection because the designation of July 15th as the World Youth Skills Day was declared by the General Assembly resolution A/RES/69/145, which was proposed by the Group of 77 and China. The resolution is based on our concerns on the high number of unemployed youth, the majority of whom live in developing countries, as well as our firm recognition in the vast potential of young people to contribute towards sustainable development and social cohesion.

3. While the global youth unemployment rate of 13 percent has become stable in 2014, it still remains above its pre-crisis level of 11.7 percent back in 2007. In most low-income countries, at least three in four young workers fall within the irregular employment category. Unavailability of quality employment in most developing countries not only blocks the successful transition of young people from school to decent jobs, but also impedes economic growth and development as a whole.

4. Therefore, it is quintessential that efforts at every level are taken to improve the quality of and access to education, and to enhance the acquisition of skills for youth. This is instrumental to securing employment and achieving sustainable development, and should remain a priority for the international community.

5. The Group of 77 and China welcome continued focus on youth issues, particularly the increased attention paid in the enhancement of youth skills. As such, we call upon all Member States, the UN system and relevant stakeholders to effectively implement the World Programme of Action for Youth as the overarching framework for youth policies, and in this regard express our appreciation to the convening of the High-level Event of the Commemoration of the World Programme of Action on Youth to highlight Youth Priorities in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development last year.

6. We also reaffirm the importance of the implementation of the outcome document of the UN High-level Meeting on Youth held in 2011, which aims to achieve job creation, improved employability, skills development and vocational training, to meet specific labour market needs, and increase

entrepreneurship.

Excellencies,

7. The Sustainable Development Goals provide a renewed opportunity to scale up coordinated action and partnership on youth employment at the national, regional and international levels. Various targets under SDG 4 on inclusive and equitable quality education, and SDG 8 on full and productive employment and decent work for all, are set to enhance relevant skills and training for youth, both women and men, with a view to achieve employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.

8. To realise such targets, we underline the importance of improving access to schools and to skills development for youth, especially the poorest, in order to empower them and unlock their potential.

9. The Group of 77 and China agree with the Secretary-General's call for the strengthening of youth capacity because they are powerful agents of change, in support of States' efforts to address current global challenges, such as eradication of poverty and hunger in all its forms and dimensions and ending environmental degradation. We concur also with the Secretary-General's call for the international community to invest politically and financially in skills development of young people so that they can help build a more just and sustainable future for all.

Excellencies,

10. The Group of 77 and China view that there is an urgency in ensuring sufficient financial resources for sustainable development, as reflected in the recent Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The Agenda reaffirms the commitment of governments to cooperate closely with private sectors and development banks to provide adequate skills development training for youth.

11. The Group of 77 and China therefore urge the international community, including the UN and development agencies, to continue and enhance their support, both technically and financially, in education, training and skills development for young people. Skills enable job growth and are a vital tool to address inequality and uplift one's livelihood. Addressing inequality builds a strong foundation for the realisation of the SDGs and paves the way towards a world where truly no one is left behind.

Excellencies,

12. Youth unemployment arising from lack of skills and education is one of the root causes of juvenile delinquency. Therefore, the Group of 77 and China recognise the importance of the need to prevent and respond to the involvement of children and youth in criminal activities. We will continue to seek to protect our children and youth from social marginalisation and exclusion and to reduce their risk of becoming victims or offenders.

13. In closing, the Group of 77 and China are committed to empower youth through skills development and education as they are positive agents in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.