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STATEMENT BY H.E MR. KARMA TSHITEEM, SECRETARY, GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS COMMISSION, ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN ON BEHALF OF BHUTAN, THAILAND AND VIET NAM AT THE FIRST MEETING OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS, 14 – 15 MARCH 2013, NEW YORK.

Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Mr. Co-Chairs.

I have the honor to deliver this statement of on behalf of Thailand, Viet Nam and Bhutan.

We note with appreciation the attention and priority accorded by the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General to the establishment of the Open Working Group and the First Meeting of the OWG.

We are pleased to note Brazil's continued contributions to this process and congratulate the Permanent Representative of Brazil for ably leading the negotiations resulting in the establishment of the OWG. The number of states desiring to be part of this process reaffirms the importance attached by the international community to the work of the OWG.

We would like to commend the work of the two co-facilitators; the Permanent Representatives of Hungary and Kenya, as well as the Permanent Representative of Brazil on the successful conclusion of the informal consultations leading to this first meeting of the OWG.

We congratulate the two co-chairs of the OWG on their election. We are committed to engaging constructively and look forward to making our contributions to this important body.

Much thought and careful consideration has been given towards the modalities of the OWG. Thailand, Viet Nam and Bhutan attach great importance to the principles of openness, transparency, inclusiveness and consensus in the OWG's works and adoption of its report.

We note that the Post-2015 Development Agenda is complex and multifaceted. There are a number of mechanisms working at many different levels in parallel, including the formulation of the SDGs by the OWG. These processes must result in One Post 2015 Development Agenda.

The legitimacy and success of the Post 2015 Development Agenda will require support and political commitment of all Member States. Therefore, the final decision on what constitutes the Post-2015 Development Agenda must rest with Member States. In this regard, both the processes and their outcomes should be inclusive and comprehensive in order to ensure the broadest possible support, commitment and ownership by the Member States.

Further in order to ensure continuity, we strongly believe that the SDGs should build upon the MDGs, taking into account existing gaps and challenges as well as their success and failures. In particular, given that poverty remains the central challenge to developing countries, we must accord the highest priority to poverty eradication as agreed in Rio.

The work of the OWG has begun much later than intended. We look forward to an early start of its substantive work. Towards this end, it is important that the conclusion of our meeting provides a clear indication of the schedule of both formal and informal meetings. This is critical for national preparations.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate our firm commitment to engage and participate constructively in the OWG process.

Thank you, Mr. Co-Chairs.