



**Statement**

**by**

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**Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa**  
**to the United Nations**

**on behalf of the Group of 77 and China**

**to**

**The Fourteenth Session**  
**of the Commission on Sustainable Development**

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Mr. President,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, may I congratulate you on your election as Chair of the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

We of the Group of 77 and China attach great importance to the issues of sustainable development. We recall the commitments on Agenda 21 and the goals contained in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI).

Mr. President

The CSD provides us an opportunity to further identify new dynamic ways to promote the integration of the three components of sustainable development – economic development, social development, and environmental protection – as interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars.

The four themes of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, climate change and air pollution/atmosphere are of paramount importance. These themes encompass political, economic, social and environmental dimensions. CSD-14 should identify the barriers and constraints that all countries, particularly developing countries, are facing in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the JPOI around these themes. Consideration of the same themes during CSD-15 with a view to setting policies and practical measures, if done appropriately and in a manner that includes the interests of all countries, can help the international community to tackle the most serious of challenges we are facing.

We also wish to highlight that our discussions should address the crosscutting issues that were identified during CSD-11. In this regard, we wish to stress the particular conditions prevailing in Africa and in the Small Island Developing States, the Least Developed Countries and Land-locked Developing Countries. Despite our best efforts, it is clear that we still require more support from the international community to meet the goals set in Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The international community should also support African countries in the implementation of the NEPAD initiative as well as other regional initiatives.

It is also important to recall that natural disasters have had a huge impact on the developing countries and remain a source of great concern. Natural disasters hinder significantly the process of development and damage the environment and should remain on the agenda of international and regional meetings for further consideration.

Mr. President

Our meeting takes place at a critical juncture for the developing world in the context of the reform of the United Nations. It is our considered view that the United Nations is the only platform on which the developing world is afforded fair opportunity to raise issues that are of concern to us and that are essential to our survival.

It is in this spirit that the Group of 77 and China requests that this discussion, underpinned as it should be by the Rio Principle 7 of Common but Differentiated Responsibility, be informed by the sincere quest to find ways of implementing Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation as well as the World Summit Outcome.

Since Rio, we have declared our collective political will that, by addressing issues on the three pillars of sustainable development, the challenges faced by the developing world can be met. We have not yet seen this will being converted to action. It is important to focus on these commitments.

The Group of 77 and China recognizes that achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals is not a choice for developing countries, but a necessity to provide better standards of living, restore human dignity, and free our people from the scourge of hunger, want and fear. However, it is not entirely within the capacity of developing countries to bring this to pass without a friendly international environment and enabling policies and practices. Development partners should also make good their promises to provide stable, predictable and adequate financial resources. Although development aid has reached an all-time high, it remains at a historically low level as a share of donor country income.

It is well known that the MDGs are still far from being achieved. The Millennium Development Goals Report 2005 reflects the progress made during the first 5 years. On the basis of the progress report, the number of women dying during childbirth has been reduced but not in all countries. As deaths and new infections mount, the prevalence of the HIV and Aids pandemic in all regions has increased and Tuberculosis and Malaria are emerging as old and permanent threats.

The Group of 77 and China remains concerned about the implementation of the commitments made in Monterrey, concerning the allocation of 0.7 percent of GDP to ODA. Given the fact that we are just 9 years away from 2015, the deadline for the achievement of MDGs, meeting this target by all developed countries at the earliest opportunity remains crucial. While thanking those developed countries

that have met this target and those that have presented a time frame for its achievement, we urge the others to do the same.

We are concerned about the problems that the biggest financial mechanism, the Global Environmental Facility, is facing on the threshold of each replenishment, particularly replenishment four, in pledging adequate financial resources to support projects in developing countries. Lack of adequate funds has created a bottleneck for many of the projects in the pipeline. To exacerbate the problem further, more complicated rules and procedures in the GEF for designing and implementing projects has increased the obstacles developing countries are facing in presenting their projects. We also urge the GEF Council to maintain a balance amongst the three pillars of sustainable development while considering and approving project proposals.

Mr. President

The Group of 77 and China represents the poorest in the world. Poverty eradication remains one of our highest priorities. To achieve this we need to find ways of changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development – all of which are overarching objectives of, and essential requirements for, sustainable development. Sustainable patterns of production and consumption, with developed countries taking the lead, should be underscored and should receive adequate attention at the national, regional and international levels in order to achieve sustainable development.

The Group of 77 and China sees the Means of Implementation essential for achieving MDGs by 2015. Hence, the international community, particularly developed countries, ought to spare no efforts in meeting the needs of developing countries to advanced and appropriate technologies, financial resources, education and training, capacity building, and promotion of human resources.

An integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources, conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, combating desertification, managing fragile ecosystems and promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development, as well as environmentally sound management of toxic chemicals and hazardous and solid wastes remain critical as in the past and deserves adequate attention.

Regional and international cooperation remains an essential factor in implementation of Agenda 21 and JPOI.

The empowerment of women and their participation in decision making should remain on the agenda of the international community. The active role of women from all walks of life is paramount to the achievement of MDGs.

The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation introduced the concept of innovative partnerships. Partnerships were seen as complimentary but not as a substitute for the commitments and responsibilities of governments, particularly in relation to the effective and urgent means of implementation of all our hard fought agreements.

Mr. President

Before concluding, it is important to remind once again about the importance of the CSD to the whole world, particularly the developing world. It is critical that the integrity of this body is maintained if we are to have significant implementation of agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. In this regard, the Group addressed a letter to the Chair of CSD14 on 4 April 2006 raising concerns on the programme of work and the equal and balanced treatment of each of the themes. We would hope that during these proceedings, these challenges would be overcome so that we would strengthen CSD and more importantly reinforce the decisions of CSD11.

I thank you.