

Statement by Ambassador Masood Khan
Permanent Representation of Pakistan
on Agenda Item 20: “Sustainable Development”
(New York, 8 November 2012)

Mr. Chairman,

Pakistan would like to associate itself with the statement made by the distinguished delegate of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We would add a few points in our national capacity.

2. Allow me also to express our regrets at the economic damage, disruption and loss of lives to all countries particularly the United States, which has been impacted most by Hurricane Sandy.

Mr. Chairman,

3. Our efforts at finding a pathway out of global economic uncertainty and weak global trend-lines for growth is being compounded by high unemployment levels, declining global trade, escalating sovereign debts, unrelenting threats to food and energy security and aggravating global climate challenge.

4. In Rio this year, together, we attempted to develop a roadmap for “the Future We Want”.

5. Even though the outcome did not meet all of our expectations as well as those of other stakeholders, it gave birth to a swath of institutional arrangements and policy prescriptions, promoted the need for sustainable development goals besides presenting a first ever-international framework on green economy. Besides, other important initiatives that we believe were acknowledged and approved at Rio included reviewing the framework of GDP, underscoring the importance of the UN Secretary General’s initiative on Sustainable Energy for All and approving the 10 Year Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production.

6. Pakistan considers the outcome as meaningful achievement in the wake of global circumstances we have been facing and we expressed our support to its adoption. We would like to once again reiterate our felicitations to Brazil and to the two co-chairs of the Bureau, Ambassador Kim Sook of the Republic of Korea and Ambassador John Ash of Antigua and Barbuda for managing the difficult outcome in a smooth manner.

Mr. Chairman,

7. Pakistan would like to express its concern at the on going political bickering on some of the key issues that in our view were settled at Rio. It is unfortunate that we have been unable to establish the Open Working Group mandated to establish Sustainable Development Goals.

8. We would urge all to exhibit flexibility and to move beyond political positions, which have so far inhibited us from undertaking the important work. We would also like to underline that the Open Working Group task is highly technical and demands significant expertise that the member states must take into account while submitting their nominations.

9. We appreciate DESA's initiative to establish an inter-agency support unit for the Open Working Group. Given the importance of this issue and complexity of the work ahead we would urge DESA to consider seeking secondment from other key international organizations, programmes and entities such as FAO, ILO, OHCHR, UNEP, WTO and MDBs to enable the Working to have a breadth of experience available for its work.

Mr. Chairman,

10. Besides the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, another important process that requires our urgent attention is to establish a similar Working Group on evolving a financing strategy. It is perplexing that this work is yet to commence. We cannot think of any plausible logic for keeping this process hostage to other decisions. In our view, the implementation of this decision must have taken a place at the soonest. Through you, Mr. Chairman, we would request the President of the General Assembly initiate the process of securing nominations from the regional groups. It is our expectation that this Working Group would also commence its work early next year.

Mr. Chairman,

11. The implementation of this Rio decision cannot be possible without delineating an effective cooperation strategy both within the UN System as well as with actors outside. More importantly, we would need robust, timely and consistent cooperation from the Bretton Woods Institutions in charting and implementing the outcome. We would, therefore, urge you and the Bureau to present to the Second Committee your thoughts outlining ideas and modalities for enhancing cooperation between the BWIs and the Second Committee at an early date.

12. Another equally important aspect of our work is delineating a collective plan of action for the post 2015 Development Agenda. We have noted the establishment of a High Level Panel by the UN Secretary General. We wish the panel and its members success in the important work ahead.

13. While these Panels have been useful to some degree, we have noted an exclusivity in its composition when compared to similar initiatives. We hope this approach does not become an additional norm supplementing the multilateral spirit that stands in sharp contrast to the United Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

14. We recognize that countries with different levels of development have different priorities. Given that there cannot be a one size fits all platform that we can establish. Equally, in this globalized and interconnect world, the economic difficulties are no more country or region specific, they are global. We all have seen how countries of different

development levels have suffered, in some cases too agonizingly. Addressing our common challenges is, therefore, our shared responsibility.

15. We, therefore, look forward to a clear plan of action and strategy in which the High Level Panel would undertake its work. We would urge the Panel to hold regular consultation with the member states in addition to seeking submissions from them. We would also support visits by the High Level Panel to different regions and countries in order to better understand the extent of challenge they have before them particularly in addressing the longstanding systematic issues and in overcoming fragilities that have plagued the implementation of existing development agenda. Notwithstanding the important work and development that we will see in near future.

Mr. Chairman,

16. The need for strengthening the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is both an objective and an international agreement achieved at Rio. Pakistan has consistently called for improving and strengthening the UNEP and has been part of the International Economic Governance process.

17. Even though, the agreement reached at Rio falls short of Pakistan's expectations, it is our view that we should move ahead and complete the process of implementation at an early date. To this end, provision of enhanced resources both from the UN regular budget and from other voluntary contribution would be a key. We are confident that we would meet this challenge of defining an implementation pathway during this session of the Second Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

18. Climate Change is the biggest development emergency. The intensity and ferocity of recent climatic event clearly suggest that even if natural climatic variability were to be responsible for such events, the intensity cannot be accounted for without strong influence of anthropogenic gases on the ecological health of the planet.

19. We believe that Second Committee plays a crucial role in testing the political resolve of the International community just prior to the annual Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which this year is scheduled to take place in Doha.

20. Following the 17th Conference of Parties at Durban last year, we have recently opened up negotiations on constructing a new climate change framework under the aegis of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change to implement the Durban Platform of Action. This process is expected to a new instrument for the post 2020 climate change regime. As with the development agenda, this process would also culminate in 2015. It is important that we do not loose sight of the critical piece.

Mr. Chairman,

21. As energy deficient and a country particularly vulnerable to adverse impact of climate change, Pakistan has a strong interest in forging international approaches and processes promoting sustainable energy and promoting the establishment of modern energy services for all.

22. Energy is the key to economic growth. This also implies that reliance on traditional means of energy cannot be forgone as of now. However, sustainable sources of energy remain a crucial aspect of our work and the future we want especially one that envisages economic growth without dangerous consequences on environment and climate change.

23. Global temperature will increase. Whether 2 degrees or more – scientific evidence suggests that we cannot afford more. To date, pledges made to date on mitigation suggest that we cannot keep it to just 2 degrees.

24. The initiative by the UN Secretary General on Sustainable Energy For All is an important step forward. It has attracted significant global attention. We congratulate the UN Secretary General for his vision and our Government has evaluated this initiative and the Action Agenda and we are pleased to confirm that Pakistan will now formally associate itself with this initiative.

Mr. Chairman,

25. Pakistan is deeply conscious and sympathetic to the special needs of the Small Island Developing States especially in the wake of the difficult global economic environment worsened by the growing threat of climate change.

26. We have continued to support and highlight the peril that the growing global temperatures and rising sea levels pose to a vast majority of these islands are finding themselves today.

27. Pakistan would like to assure our SIDs partners of our strong and continued support in meeting these and other challenges through the Mauritius Strategy framework.

Mr. Chairman,

28. If anything, the most recent natural disaster that struck this very city underlines the need for high level of coordination and a sophisticated early warning system to ensure we can save life and property from these man made and natural disasters.

29. For majority of the developing world, early warning system remains a challenge and often inoperable before or at the time of crises and disasters. As a country vulnerable to adverse impact of climate change, we are deeply conscious of the need for upgrading and further strengthening the role of early warning system in the Disaster Risk reduction strategy both at the national and international level.

30. Through you we would like to express our deep appreciation to the ISDR Secretariat for their continued efforts in managing the swathe of such crisis across the globe. We urge UN Habitat, UNEP, UNDP and UNISDR to continue to review their operational and procedural modalities in the wake of fast changing global environment where frequency and intensity of such disasters are becoming more challenging than ever.

Mr. Chairman,

31. Before I conclude, allow me to once again express our strong support to your work and your stewardship of this Committee.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.