

**Statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China by Ambassador Neil
Pierre, Permanent Mission of Guyana to the United Nations, at the General
Debate of the 2020 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
(7 July 2020)**

Madam President,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. Allow me at the outset to express the Group's appreciation to you, Madam President, for convening this meeting, and to the ECOSOC Secretariat for the excellent preparations, all under difficult circumstances.
3. Our theme of “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development” is very timely given the importance of this year and the exceptional circumstances of our meeting.
4. The Group wishes to reiterate that the high-level political forum, consistent with its universal, intergovernmental character, should continue to provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development. The Forum is central to the follow-up and review of progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as in enhancing the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development. Its mandate to review progress in the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and environmental fields, as well as their respective means of implementation, must not be forgotten and must be safeguarded.

Madam President,

5. This year marks the beginning of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development. Sadly, we are not on track to fully implement the Agenda and achieve the SDGs.
6. The Group is deeply concerned that our already daunting development challenges have been gravely exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. It has aggravated structural weaknesses and fragile systems in many of our countries. Its impacts are

certain to go well beyond 2020, eroding the development gains achieved over many decades.

7. The Group stresses that we are developing countries and development is our top priority. The 2030 Agenda has charted the course for global development and requires earnest implementation.
8. We believe that it is imperative to begin to explore a holistic and comprehensive approach to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We remain firm in the conviction that we must pursue a people centered, sustainable, inclusive and resilient approach to recovery.

Madam President

9. We must accelerate actions to realize our objectives during this decade. The Group reaffirms that poverty eradication in all its forms and dimensions is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. We are concerned that, for the first time in decades, the trend of poverty reduction is being reversed, and in this regard, we stress the urgency of taking concrete and targeted measures to eradicate poverty with increased resources. Likewise, ending hunger and achieving food security and nutrition for all are fundamental to the 2030 Agenda, in order to truly leave no one behind.
10. The Group strongly believes that the call contained in the 2030 Agenda to reduce inequality within and among countries, as well as promoting inclusive, just and equitable societies, is critical to empower people, in particular the most vulnerable.
11. Consistent with the objective of leaving no country and no one behind the Group emphasizes the important role of the international community in addressing the challenges and needs faced by all developing countries, especially countries in special situations, in particular African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, as well as the specific challenges faced by many middle-income countries, conflict and post-conflict countries, and countries and peoples living under foreign occupation.

12. We reaffirm, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the need to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of States.

Madam President

13. Our Group firmly rejects the imposition of all forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions, that are not in accordance with international law, against developing countries. Such actions undermine the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and international law and impede development. The Group calls upon the international community to adopt urgent and effective measures to eliminate the use of unilateral coercive economic measures against developing countries.
14. Moreover, the Group accords a high level of importance to the principles of unity, solidarity and multilateralism, which are enshrined in the universal and indivisible nature of the 2030 Agenda. The Group wishes to affirm that now is the time for us to draw on the strength of these principles, build better partnerships and deliver on our collective commitments to place our world on an accelerated pathway towards sustainability.

Madam President,

15. Our Group notes that the scale and level of ambition of the 2030 Agenda require greater emphasis on strengthening the means of implementation, particularly in the areas of finance, international trade, technology and capacity-building for developing countries. We emphasize the importance of creating a global environment conducive for development, characterized by sustainable financing options, global partnerships, and long-term investments for sustainable development.
16. Furthermore, the Group reaffirms that Official Development Assistance (ODA), is the main channel for international cooperation. It is critical and indispensable for achieving the SDGs. The Group urges donor countries to honor their ODA commitments and to align ODA with the specific national priorities and strategies of developing countries, to better meet their development needs.

Madam President

17. Addressing the existential threats posed by climate change requires an unwavering commitment to the multilateral approach, embodied in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). In this context, the Group calls for urgent global action, in line with UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, on the need to shift policies and finance consistent with limiting global warming to below 1.5 degrees Celsius. We reaffirm the principles of the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement, including the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR).
18. The Group supports a post-2020 global biodiversity framework that contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and places the global community on a path towards realizing the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity.
19. We recognize science, technology and innovation as one of the most transformative means to achieve sustainable development. We also stress the importance of building infrastructure as a powerful driver of economic growth, social and environmental development and highlight its role in promoting policy synergies, trade facilitation, infrastructure connectivity, financial cooperation and people-to-people exchange at the sub-regional, regional and global levels, which are some key areas in achieving sustainable development.
20. Progress in sustainable development must come through opportunities for developing countries to bridge the technological and digital divide. Technology transfer is one of the core priorities of developing countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda, and in this regard, we underscore the need to accelerate the transfer of technologies, including on concessional and preferential terms, that are essential for implementing a wide range of SDGs. This pandemic has exposed a greater digital divide, it cannot be business as usual.

Madam President,

21. The Group welcomes efforts at the regional level for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including by the UN Regional Economic Commissions, and

Regional Fora on Sustainable Development, other regional and sub-regional organizations, as well as contributions of major groups and other relevant stakeholders.

22. We look forward to a constructive engagement throughout this forum. We are ready to debate, discuss and find solutions for realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.

I Thank You.