



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY THE DELEGATION
OF IRAQ AT THE INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS ON THE 2025 ECOSOC HLS AND
HLPF DRAFT MINISTERIAL DECLARATION
(New York, 28 March 2025)**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. At the outset, the Group would like to thank the co-facilitators for their efforts in the preparation of the elements paper.

We note with appreciation that the text will be following the format of previous ministerial declarations. This is essential to give a straightforward and logical structure to the document.

We reiterate that a line-by-line negotiation is the most transparent and inclusive way to address the process and we regret that the current roadmap does not reflect that. We thank the co-facilitators in advance for the assurance provided that we will keep the momentum reached last year when it comes to the process. Thus, we kindly request that the roadmap be adjusted accordingly to reflect line by line negotiations, rather than revised texts.

The Group believes that the current outline needs to be further strengthened. The language of the previous HLPF Ministerial Declarations should be used as the basis for 2025 HLPF Ministerial Declaration.

Terminologies from relevant inter-governmentally agreed UN development outcomes such as the 2030 Agenda, UNFCCC and its Paris Agreement, and Addis Ababa Action Agenda must be used.

The integrated, indivisible and universal nature of the 2030 Agenda makes it essential that we pay attention to all of the SDGs.

On Section I of the elements paper, focus should be placed on the urgent need to address the alarming SDGs financing gap, poverty and hunger and ensuring that no one and no country is left behind. Further, the digital divide and technological disparities, limiting access to innovation and AI, especially when 6.2 billion people are still offline, can be considered.

It is important that we do not prejudge ongoing discussions in other ongoing processes. At the same time, we underline the need to implement the Political Declaration of the 2023 SDG Summit as well as the relevant development-related commitments on the Pact for the Future, while reaffirming that the HLPF is the mandated platform to review the Agenda 2030 and its SDGs, which is our guidance towards realizing our sustainable development.

On Section II, we would emphasize that, in addition to the elements highlighted in the draft outline, the following additional actions must be included:

-Exert all efforts to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions - economic, social and environmental - in a balanced and integrated manner, while guided by all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.

-Scale up the provision of the means of implementation for developing countries to achieve the SDGs, as well as access to concessional finance, transfer of technology and capacity building.

-Call on States to refrain from promulgating and applying any unilateral economic, financial or trade measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that impeded the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries.

- The group reaffirms that the implementation and the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda must include and address the severe difficulties faced by countries and peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation and strive to remove the obstacles to the full realization of their right to self-determination and right to development, which adversely affect their economic and social development. The group also reaffirms that, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the need to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of States.

Regarding SDG 3: we appreciate that the number of issues that were raised by the Group are reflected in the paper. However, we believe that the missing elements in this segment which are critical for developing countries to achieve SDG3 are strengthened. This includes international cooperation and the means of implementation.

The Group is also of the view that the zero draft must address various approaches and issues in relation to health in a balanced, inclusive and consensual manner, particularly on the notion of One Health Approach and climate-change related impact, the zero draft ought to avoid singling out or highlighting one issue or approach over others.

Therefore, we believe that the following key elements should be addressed and further strengthened:

- Scale up adequate and sustainable health financing and investment for developing countries and recognize that financing SDG 3 requires global solidarity and collective effort.
- Urge Member States to strengthen international cooperation to support efforts to build and strengthen capacity in developing countries, including through enhanced official development assistance and financial and technical support to development and innovation programs.
- Recognize the transformative potential of digital health technologies in advancing health promotion, enhancing disease prevention, and supporting the achievement of universal health coverage and health related SDGs.
- Highlight the importance of data-driven and evidence-based policymaking to address health inequities, and to accelerate progress towards the SDGs.
- Commit to address health inequities and inequalities between rural and urban areas, within and among countries, and particularly between developing and developed countries.
- Strengthen regional health responses and cross-border pandemic coordination
- Promote and improve maternal, newborn and child health outcomes.

- Reaffirm our resolve to realize our vision of a world with access to inclusive and equitable quality education, and universal health coverage.
- Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, including by strengthening health systems and achieving universal health coverage, and address gaps in preventing, preparing for, and responding to current and future pandemics and health emergencies.
- Include greater emphasis on digital health innovations, traditional medicine, and community-based healthcare models.
- Address health workforce capacity-building, particularly in developing countries.
- Include strategies for the aging population and their specific healthcare needs.
- Add comprehensive strategies for prevention, early diagnosis, and management of non-communicable diseases.
- Assist developing countries to build expertise and strengthen local and regional production of vaccines, medicines, diagnostics and other health technologies in order to facilitate equitable access, recognizing that the high prices of some health products and the inequitable access to such products impede progress towards achieving universal health coverage, particularly for developing countries.
- Seriously concerned that the supply of health products and technologies is dependent on manufacturing facilities concentrated in few countries and that the lack of national or regional production capacities, adequate infrastructure, distribute and deliver of diagnostics, medicines, vaccines and other health products and technologies, particularly in developing countries, hampers efforts to achieve diagnosis, treatment and vaccination targets for several diseases, at the right time, safely and efficiently, especially in the context of health emergencies.

Regarding SDG 5, the Group appreciates that the main issues raised by the Group under the goal have been taken on in the elements paper. We believe that the inclusion of the following points will strengthen the first draft:

- Recognizing that SDG5 faces setbacks when there are delays in achieving other SDGs, and that the most vulnerable to risks are often the most adversely effected. At the same time, SDG5 needs to be considered as a cross-cutting element in accelerating the other SDGs.
- Emphasizing the importance of women-led development, and the empowerment of women to take ownership of development, especially in developing countries.
- Taking note of the measures to encourage and enable the effective participation of women in all spheres through comprehensive social policies to eliminate discrimination and other mechanisms.

We also seek further clarification from the co-facilitators on the reference on supporting equal rights and opportunities through gender, as the language “through gender” is not a common formulation at the UN.

The Group regrets that its strong call for “tangible actions” is not included in the elements paper, as we believe that it is important to build on the momentum and commitments of Beijing+30 to focus on accelerating progress, especially at a time when SDG5 remains incredibly off-track.

Regarding SDG 8, we appreciate that some important issues for the Group have been taken on board in this section. Even though we don’t fully go along with some language as they have been

reflected, we look forward to seeing how they are addressed in the Zero Draft and work on that basis to make it agreeable.

The focus should be to support sustainable development across its three pillars in a balanced and integrated manner. The Group would not be supportive of a one-size-fits all approach.

On the other hand, there are some key matters that remain of serious concern, mainly the notion of “shared ownership” of the SDGs. The Group does not support this approach, which undermines the principle of national ownership and the leadership at the country level in our pursuit of sustainable development, as reflected in the 2030 Agenda.

The Group believes that the following key actions on SDG8 are missing in the elements paper, and need to be addressed:

- 1- Recommit to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable growth in developing countries. Invest in economy, including care-economy, to restore and create jobs.
- 2- Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological development and innovation.
- 3- Recognize the important role of the cultural and creative economy as a driver for inclusive and sustainable development growth.
- 4- Address formalizations of the informal sector and social protection for gig and platform workers.
- 5- Scale up investments in digital infrastructure, capacity-building and technology transfer, to ensure that developing countries benefit from the digital economy.
- 6- Address opportunities, risks and challenges posed by new technologies, including AI, on the workplace and the workforce.
- 7- Recognize the positive contributions of migrants for inclusive growth and social and economic development.
- 8- Redouble efforts to stabilize and expand employment.
- 9- Enhance labour laws, on national conditions, and enforcement to protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers. Secure the prohibition and elimination of child labour in all its forms.
- 10- Highlight global cooperation in skill development, including mutual recognition of skills and qualifications to facilitate labor mobility.
- 11- Support micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises as drivers of inclusive growth and decent jobs through formalization, financing and sustainable business practices.
- 12- Close the financing gap for universal social protection through financial reforms and international cooperation.
- 13- Support tourism in a sustainable manner, benefiting local communities and creating decent job opportunities for all.

14- Recognize international trade as an engine for inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction, and for the promotion of sustainable development.

Regarding SDG 14, the Group appreciates that the key issues raised by the Group have been included in the elements paper. However, we do see a scope to strengthen these elements.

First, the Group would like to see stronger language on means of implementation. In this regard, we support enhancing financial mechanisms to drive SDG14, including commitment to supporting capacity building, facilitating exchange of knowledge, technology and innovation, and financial mobilization to all developing countries to achieve SDG14. We would also like to see reference to enhancing cooperation, including South-South and triangular cooperation in addressing SDG14.

Second, we would like to recognize the potential of blue economy initiatives, including eco-tourism, and small-scale and artisanal fisheries, for achieving sustainable development and livelihoods, food security and employment. We also highlight the need for investing in such initiatives, and providing incentives to sustainably promote blue economy, including through promoting responsible fisheries, as well as combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. We want to underline that economic growth must be balanced with environmental protection and social inclusion in sustainable ocean management.

Third, we are of the view that the Ministerial Declaration should acknowledge progress made in multilateral processes towards the achievement of SDG14, including the conclusion of the KMGBF, and the BBNJ Agreement.

The Group would also like to emphasize that the discussion on enhancing efforts to build climate resilience must include the principles of equity and CBDR-RC.

We would note that in achieving SDG14, relevant traditional knowledge, knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities and local knowledge systems must also be considered at the same level as science and evidence based solutions.

The Group is also of the view that we should not prejudge the outcome of ongoing discussions under different processes, including UNOC3 and the Plastics Treaty.

SDG 17

Regarding SDG 17, We understand that, given the ongoing consultation of FfD4 Outcome Document, we should not prejudge the outcome of the negotiation.

We wish to stress that while we recognize that domestic resource mobilization is an important source for financing for development, ODA clearly remains a critical source of development financing and we strongly urge developed countries to scale up and fulfill the ODA commitments as they bear the primary responsibility in financing for development

Besides, the Group wishes to include the following issues missing on the element papers that are essential to the Group, and need to be addressed:

- 1- Stress our deep concern on financing gaps and decreasing trends of development finance. Recognize the urgency of providing predictable, sustainable and sufficient development finance to developing countries.
- 2- reiterate that international development cooperation, especially North-South cooperation, remains a fundamental catalyst to sustainable development. As North-South cooperation is the main channel of development financing, with South-South cooperation as a complement to, rather than a substitute for, the international community must uphold the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" (CBDR) and push North-South cooperation to continue to play its key role.
- 3- underscore the critical importance of delivering on pledges on special drawing rights in a timely manner. Call for the urgent voluntary rechannelling of additional SDRs
- 4- reiterate the call for scaling up debt swaps for Sustainable Development Goals, as appropriate.
- 5- welcome the meaningful involvement and participation of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other MDBs in the HLPF.
- 6- acknowledge ongoing discussions on measures of progress on sustainable development that complement or go beyond gross domestic product to take a more inclusive approach to international cooperation.
- 7- welcome the adoption of resolution 78/322 of 13 August 2024 on the multidimensional vulnerability index, call for the full and effective implementation of its mandate,
- 8- we invite international financial institutions, multilateral development banks and international organisations to incorporate multidimensional vulnerability, including the use of the multidimensional vulnerability index, as a complement to their existing practices and policies, to inform their development cooperation policies and practices;
- 9- committed to strengthening the inclusiveness and effectiveness of tax cooperation at the United Nations and look forward to the ongoing work of the intergovernmental negotiating committee.
- 10- Underscore the role of innovative financing to support financing for development
- 11- Recognize that unilateral economic, financial or trade measures that are not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, impede the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries.
- 12- Ensure greater alignment between international cooperation (in all its forms) and national development priorities
- 13- - Commit to bridging the science, technology and innovation divides and the responsible use of science, technology, and innovation as drivers of sustainable development and to increase the use of science and scientific evidence in policymaking.
- 14- - Commit to continuing to assist developing countries in avoiding a build-up of unsustainable debt and in implementing resilience measures so as to reduce the risk of relapsing into another debt crisis.
- 15- - Recommit to preventing and combating illicit financial flows and strengthening international cooperation and good practices on assets return and recovery. Reaffirm our commitment to strive to eliminate safe havens that create incentives for the transfer abroad of stolen assets and illicit financial flows.
- 16- - Take action to bridge the digital divides and spread the benefits of digitalization through technology transfer. Expand participation of all countries, in particular developing countries,

in the digital economy, including by enhancing their digital infrastructure connectivity, building their capacities and access to technological innovations.

17- Enhance support to developing countries to enhance their national data and statistical capacity.

Regarding the Voluntary National Reviews, the Group notes the following:

- The VNRs should be strengthened as a tool for sharing knowledge and tracking progress. We recognize the valuable work of the Group of Friends of VNR, co-chaired by Morocco and the Philippines, and encourage greater support for developing countries in preparing comprehensive VNRs.
- The Group notes that the third point (Strengthen the peer learning character, participatory nature, accountability and harmonization of VNRs) lacks some clarity, and some parts of it contradicts the fact that these national reviews are VOLUNTARY.
- There is a need to strengthen the inclusion of civil society, private sector, and academia in the formulation and reviews of VNRs.
- The Group recognizes, and this is an agreed language, that the voluntary national reviews presented by countries reflect the efforts at national level to integrate SDGs into national plans and policies and acknowledge the need to continue supporting countries in the VNR, including the work of the Group of Friends of VNRs. The Group is of the opinion that any references to accountability might hinder the willingness of the countries to present their VNRs.

We look forward to engaging on the zero draft, to work together and formulate language for the Ministerial Declaration, which will have the most impact, while respecting the diversity of views of the UN members.

Thank you.