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**STATEMENT**

**BY**

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**DELIVERED DURING**

**THE FIRST SESSION OF THE OPEN WORKING GROUP ON  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

**ON**

**AGENDA ITEM 3:  
(Follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference  
on Sustainable Development, relating to a proposal for  
sustainable development goals)**

**15 MARCH 2013  
NEW YORK**

**Please check against delivery**

**Mr. President,**

**Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,**

**Mr. President,**

Allow me to extend my delegation's profound gratitude to you, for organizing this very important Session that inaugurates the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. My delegation wishes to congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Kenya and Hungary on their election as Co-chairs of the Open Working Group. We have the confidence in their leadership as already evidenced by their able facilitation of the consultations of the draft Working Methods of the Group.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished Permanent Representatives of Algeria, Chad and Benin, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the African Group and the Least Developed Countries respectively.

**Mr. President,**

We meet at a time when most of the developing countries particularly in Africa, are anxiously racing against time to register a positive progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. This is a difficult time of panic in the developing world following the ongoing economic downturn inflicted on us by the world financial and economic crisis. Despite a marked progress in health related MDGs, the struggle to win the fight against HIV and AIDS endemic continues. Progress is also sluggish in the other MDGs especially MDG 1- on the elimination of hunger and eradication of poverty, while issues of environmental sustainability have not been afforded enough attention within the realm of development. It is therefore, practically worrisome to imagine some of our countries failing to reach the desired end in the remaining time. In this regard, we dare not envision the MDGs towing the line of the Brussels Plan of Action of being "an unfinished business." It is however, encouraging that this august body stands prepared to look beyond the MDGs and build upon their successes and gaps in the development of the Sustainable Development Goals and the post 2015 development agenda.

**Mr. President,**

My delegation welcomes the establishment of the Open Working Group on sustainable development goals as an important step towards the implementation of the Rio +20 Outcome document "the Future we Want." We wish to indicate our readiness to engage in the process with the hope that the Group will follow the letter and the spirit of paragraph 248 of the Outcome document. In this regard, we would like to emphasize the critical characteristics of the thirty (30) member Open Working Group, namely: the "inclusiveness and transparency". In our view, adherence to these attributes will facilitate for wide consultations among the Member states and other relevant stakeholders for the development of the new global goals.

**Mr. President,**

Coming from a least developed country, where abject of poverty remains a shameful challenge in our everyday life, the achievement of MDGs while working on a holistic approach to future development goals is an imperative. We are hopeful, that the envisaged sustainable development goals will focus on among others: eradication of extreme poverty, food security and sustainable agriculture, protection of biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources, improved access to energy and technology transfer. We believe that the development of SDGs will not depart from the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

In conclusion, we wish to reiterate the importance of this session and express our resolve to join hands with the Open Working Group in our endeavor to galvanize the three dimensions of sustainable development into a new set of goals in a balanced manner.

**I THANK YOU**