Mr. Chairman,

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports and to associate my remarks with the statements delivered by Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 & China and by Gabon on behalf of the African Group.

Mr. Chairman,

I commend the Second Committee’s practice of uploading statements on the UN Paper Smart portal. It is a more sustainable way of conducting the work of the committee. It is reassuring to see that the committee practices what it preaches.

I also take this opportunity to reiterate our proposal on rearranging and reallocating the agenda items under the Sustainable Development cluster so that it incorporates economic and social matters, instead of focusing only on environmental issues. We prepared a concept paper which we shared with the Chair of the Bureau of this Committee, and we stand ready to help take this matter forward.

Mr. Chairman,

This is a pivotal session for sustainable development issues. We are at a unique juncture as we are about to develop sustainable development goals, building on the MDGs, and to review, strengthen and upgrade the international development agenda. Expectations are that the post-2015 development agenda could galvanize the world to re-commit to promoting the developing countries’ quest for sustainable development. In this regard, I would like to stress the following points:
1. As reaffirmed in the Rio+20 outcome document, poverty eradication is the greatest challenge facing the world today. It is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. This is a matter of basic justice and human rights. In a world of abundance and technological advances, no one should be left behind. No one should face social and economic exclusion.

2. Despite the significant progress achieved in many important fields of development over the past two decades, developing countries struggle to advance their level of development. An unfavorable international economic environment prevails and a worrying trend to decrease Official Development Assistance and further earmark is gaining force. The right to development and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should remain the foundation of the current and future global development efforts.

3. We welcome the establishment of the High-Level Political Forum. The lessons learned from the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) should be the starting point for shaping the work of the HLPF. It should build on the strengths of the CSD and address its shortcomings. It should promote political visibility and effectiveness. It should provide a leadership role and support developing countries’ efforts to achieve sustainable development.

4. We welcome the recommendations in the Secretary-General report on the creation of a technology facilitation mechanism to promote the development, transfer and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies, to be launched by the HLPF. Technology is a key means of implementation. Progress towards elaborating the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda will depend on the progress achieved with regard to the means of implementation: mainly finance and technology.

5. Climate change is one of the areas where we have not succeeded to collectively act in a responsible manner. The United Nations Framework Convention on climate change (UNFCCC) is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change. Any international response to climate change must enhance the implementation of the UNFCCC and must be in accordance with its principles and provisions, in particular the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities.
6. We took note of the progress made towards addressing climate change at the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP-18) in Doha through concrete decisions on remaining work under the Bali Action Plan, a Plan of Work under the Durban Platform and a Second Commitment Period of the Kyoto Protocol with a clear time line. The Second Commitment Period of Kyoto Protocol, however, lacks ambition and we hope that its level will be enhanced in 2014 as agreed at COP-18.

7. We also noted the progress in the work of the Ad hoc Working Group on Durban Platform (ADP) and emphasized that the outcome of the Parties’ work under the ADP must enable us to further enhance the full, effective and sustained implementation of the Convention. We reiterate that the work under the ADP and its outcome must be under the Convention and in accordance with the objective, principles and provisions stipulated in it, including the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. The process under the ADP must not lead to a reinterpretation or a rewriting of the Convention.

8. Egypt stresses the need to urgently close the ambition gap, and expresses its concern with the lack of fulfillment of commitments by developed countries, especially given their historical responsibilities. In addressing this gap, focus must not only be limited to mitigation but also include gaps relating to finance, technology and support for capacity building. We emphasize that developed countries must take robust and ambitious mitigation commitments, with ambitious quantitative emissions limitation reduction targets, as required by science and mandated by the Convention. They should also declare clear quantified commitments in relation to means of implementation for the period pre-2020 that would allow for the full operationalization of the established institutions like the Green Climate fund and provide confidence in the process. In this context, Egypt looks forward to a successful and comprehensive outcome at the COP 19/CMP 9.
9. The extent to which developing countries will effectively participate in the collective efforts to tackle climate change depends on the level of support provided by developed countries, in line with their commitments under the Convention, related to financial resources and transfer of technology, while fully taking into account that economic and social development and poverty eradication are the first and overriding priorities of developing countries.

10. Water is crucial for achieving sustainable development and the MDGs. Properly managing water is also essential for achieving growth, social and economic development, poverty reduction and equity.

11. Egypt is classified by the UN as a water poverty stricken state, and is on the verge of becoming a water scarce country. Estimates show that Egypt will experience water shortages equal to 15.2 billion m3 of water by the year 2017. Egypt is also heavily affected by the wave of drought hitting the Eastern African coast, as well as the Sahel region.

12. In the context of formulating the SDGs and elaborating the post-2015 development agenda, considerations must be given to agreeing on a water-secured world goal through enhancing sustainable water resources management, with the full participation of all concerned countries, and promoting benefit sharing as well as the no harm principle in line with international law. Other possible goals could include the reduction of the number of people facing water poverty and of the number of countries facing water stress.

13. Energy & its production is also an issue of great priority. We need to move urgently towards shaping a comprehensive United Nations energy agenda that includes the creation of an effective mechanism for the transfer of advanced energy technologies, particularly in the field of new & renewable energy. We welcome the Secretary General initiative on "Sustainable Energy for All".

14. Fighting land degradation, drought and desertification should be a priority issue. We cannot adapt to climate change or mitigate its effects without resorting to sustainable land management. We stress the importance of scaling up international efforts to combat this negative phenomenon, through the adoption of an integrated approach, strengthening national capacities, as well as through technology transfer.

I thank you for your attention.