Statement
delivered
by
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Deputy Permanent Representative of Nigeria to
the United Nations
at
the
Second Committee Debate on Sustainable
Development

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Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of my delegation, I thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive reports on this important agenda item. Nigeria aligns itself with the statements made by Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 & China, and Gabon on behalf of the African Group respectively.

More than two decades ago, world leaders at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro agreed that worsening poverty and growing stresses on the environment required greater integration between environmental and development concerns.

That agreement gave birth to a global consensus document - Agenda 21. While we recognize that important strides have been made at national, regional and global levels in achieving the fundamental objectives of Agenda 21 through the promotion of coordinated development in economic, social and environmental areas, we are not oblivious of the negative impacts of successive waves of crises on the efforts of the developing countries to achieve sustainable development.

Nigeria believes that there is a need for the global community to redouble its effort to move forward the sustainable development agenda. We particularly stress the need for the developed countries not to renege on their commitments to developing countries in the areas of finance, trade, development assistance, and transfer of environment-friendly technology.

Nigeria welcomes the recent inauguration of the High-Level Political Forum and reaffirms the need for the Forum to enhance the three dimensions of sustainable development in an integrated manner. At the national level, the Nigerian Government has adopted a comprehensive development strategy that is people-centered and geared towards achieving the goals of sustainable development. We aim to integrate our economic and social development,
achieve harmonious development between humankind and nature, and strike a balance between immediate and long-term interests.

Small Island Developing States (SIDS) are faced with unique structural and external challenges in achieving sustainable development. Nigeria believes that global efforts at furthering the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy must take full cognizance of their characteristics and vulnerabilities. We believe that the United Nations has a fundamental role to play in the mobilization of financial assistance, transfer of appropriate technology and support capacity-building for SIDS. We also stress the need for stronger partnerships involving multiple stakeholders to help SIDS achieve balanced and sustainable development in economic, social and environmental areas.

The prevalence of natural disasters constitutes a serious impediment to the achievement of sustainable development. Over the years, millions of people have lost their livelihoods and assets due to weather-related disasters and other natural phenomena. The need for concerted global action to collectively respond to such disasters and prepare to mitigate their impacts cannot be over-emphasized.

It is important that long-term strategies are developed and adopted for mitigation of natural disaster and building of resilience across all regions. In this regard, Nigeria calls for the continued implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, which is aimed at facilitating international and regional cooperation in disaster reduction.

We also stress the need for the global community to strengthen exchanges in disaster relief technology and information, establish mechanisms of regional cooperation for monitoring, early warning and assessment of major natural disasters so as to minimize the consequences emanating from disasters. Also, we believe that particular attention should focus on securing long-term, stable and predictable core resources for
disaster reduction as well as the intensification of support to developing countries in the area of disaster reduction capacity building.

Mr. Chairman

The adverse effects of climate change are real and pose existential threats to some States which are threatened by submersion, while others have to contend with rising sea levels, perennial flooding, erosion, mudslides/landslides, deforestation and desertification and loss of habitats. These have affected the sustainable development agendas, particularly of those vulnerable economies in Africa that had seen encouraging growth numbers slashed, stalled or reversed with dire consequences for food security, job creation, social development and environmental sustainability.

It is essential therefore, that mitigation and adaptation measures are feasible and implementable by those who are most affected. In this respect, Nigeria calls for a funding mechanism that is less bureaucratic with simplified procedures that grants ready access to those most in need of immediate assistance. To ensure a climate resilient future, all stakeholders have to be actively engaged from governments, major financial institutions, private sector entities and civil society.

Mr. Chairman,

Nigeria places high premium on sustainable development in all its dimensions and we have included its elements in our medium to long-term national development plan. The Federal Government of Nigeria has developed initiatives in various sectors particularly agriculture, petroleum, solid minerals, power, renewable energy, trade and investment, infrastructure, poverty eradication, MDGs and efficient urban planning. It equally accords priority to best practices for environmentally sustainable activities and green technology and the whole new area of green economy.
We urge the developed countries and relevant international institutions to renew their commitment to partner with developing countries in their earnest efforts to acquire environmental-friendly technologies and capacity to implement appropriate measures to address climate change adversities and embrace green economy. We also encourage relevant bilateral and multilateral funding institutions to prioritize concessional and soft investment loans to developing countries in the new and renewable energy sector.

Sustainable development requires the efficient and prudent use of energy. This is because sustainable use of energy has far reaching impact on various sectors of economic development such as manufacturing, education, climate change, food and water security, telecommunications and transportation. For many developing countries, the lack of access to clean, affordable and reliable energy hinders human, social and economic development and is a major impediment to achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. My delegation commends the UN Secretary-General for launching the global initiative - Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL), aimed at making sustainable energy for all a reality by 2030.

Availability of renewable energy in developing countries would contribute significantly to poverty alleviation including the creation of employment though they should be in the right mix as per national circumstances and capacity. In step with its obligation to the African Strategy on Emission Reduction, Nigeria developed a National Renewable Energy Master plan Project. The objectives of the Master plan include:

- Addressing the challenges of moving towards a clean, reliable, secure, competitive energy supply based on international best practices; and
- Setting up and implementing an integrated renewable programme that supports the national development agenda such as those on emission
reductions, MDGs, alternative sources of energy, augmentation of income and rural poverty eradication.

Mr. Chairman,

One of the greatest challenges of our time is desertification. It has been estimated that around one third of the world’s surface now suffers from its effect with around 1.5 billion people affected globally. The effects of frequent and severe droughts in Africa and in particular in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel cannot be over-emphasized. It has threatened the livelihoods of some of the poorest and most vulnerable populations. For many African countries, fighting land degradation and desertification and mitigating the effects of drought are prerequisites for economic growth and social progress.

Nigeria is implementing a number of measures to check desert encroachment. These include the Green Wall Sahara Programme which entails planting trees aimed at ultimately halting the advancement of the Sahara Desert in the northern parts of the country. In this connection, we call on the international community to support efforts at national, regional and global levels to monitor land degradation as well as support efforts at mitigating the effects of desertification in order to promote sustainable development and eradicate poverty in developing countries.

We welcome the decisions of the Eleventh Conference of the Parties (COP 11) held in Windhoek, Namibia, last September and reaffirm the need for the global community to strive towards the achievement of a land degradation neutral world in the context of sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

Besides the loss of arable lands, Africa is also exposed to the tragic loss of its surface waters which support millions of lives of both humans and flora and fauna. The disappearance of the Lake Chad through drying up at this very moment is a top issue of concern for my Government. Efforts are being made
by the Member States of the Lake Chad Basin Commission to address this existential problem. But a lot more needs to be done by the rest of the international community especially the countries from which inter-basin water transfers are expected to take place to cooperate and make this project a reality.

Nigeria commends the laudable outcome of the Special General Assembly Event to follow-up efforts made towards achieving the MDGs as well as the ongoing processes at the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing. We stress the need for proper coordination and synergy between all these processes to ensure they effectively feed into the overarching objective of sustainable development goals, and in particular the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda.

Development strategies are the prerogative of each country but it is pertinent that in doing so, each is allowed the freedom to choose those that are appropriate to its needs and levels taking into account its national conditions. Such strategies must evolve policies that are pro-growth and social protection, broad-based and inclusive of full productive employment generation and decent work. In this respect, we urge that such laudable initiatives be complemented by concrete and supportive international programmes which expand development opportunities through promotion of regional, sub-regional and interregional cooperation as well as involvement of private entities and civil society.

I thank you