Equality and Inclusivity Beyond 2015

Statement delivered by
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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, since this is the first opportunity for the Philippines to speak, please allow me to join others in congratulating you and our distinguished colleagues on your election as Chair and as members of the Bureau. We are confident that under your leadership and guidance, this session will produce fruitful and positive results.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by Malaysia on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

We welcome the reports made by the Secretary-General under the agenda item on Social Development.

Mr. Chairman,

As we begin to shape our collective vision for a development agenda beyond 2015, my delegation appreciates the focus being given to the importance of an inclusive and people-centered approach.

The Secretary-General's reports tell us of the need to enhance the capabilities of all individuals and groups, in particular vulnerable social groups and people living in poverty, to participate fully in all aspects of society and to exercise greater choice and...
control over their own well-being. The reports stress that through active participation, people influence decisions determining the functioning and well-being of their societies, while positive outcomes of those decisions reinforce their empowerment.

We could not agree more.

 Discussions at the recently concluded High-Level Meetings on Disability and Development and on Migration and Development echo that meaningful participation of vulnerable groups in society can greatly enhance and contribute to economic growth. To help achieve this, the root causes of discrimination and social, political, and economic exclusion must be effectively addressed. This requires, among others, expanding access to basic services and ensuring that the services provided respond to the needs of all social and cultural groups in society.

Mr. Chairman,

Provision for the basic needs of the people, especially the needs of the disadvantaged and vulnerable, must remain at the center of the government’s policies and programmes.

For my government, the most productive policies and investments are those that empower people to maximize their capacities, resources, and opportunities. We strongly support measures for the empowerment of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, migrants, women and children, youth, and the elderly, and strongly advocate policies that aim to raise their participation and integration in society.

Social development is an integral part of our national development agenda. The Philippine Development Plan 2011-2016, which envisions meaningful, inclusive growth for the country, is anchored on President Benigno S. Aquino III’s 16-point “Social Contract with the Filipino People.” It consists of three broad strategies, namely: high and sustained economic growth, which provides productive and decent employment opportunities; provision of equal access to development opportunities across geographic areas and across different income and social spectrums to ensure that economic growth and opportunities translate to poverty reduction; and implementation of effective and responsive social safety nets in order to assist those who will not be able to catch up with the rapid economic growth.

National efforts, however, to be truly effective, must be complemented by regional and international efforts. Hence, we underscore the importance of inclusive development cooperation within the framework of bilateral, regional, and multilateral initiatives. At this point, we wish to stress that it is also important for governments in developed countries to ensure that their policies – beyond aid – are supportive of, or at least do not undermine, socially, economically and environmentally sustainable policies in developing countries and that countries and their development partners should explore
ways to better leverage official development assistance for social development and to scale up existing mechanisms to extend them in support of the Millennium Development Goals such as those related to education, food, security, and poverty eradication.

Mr. Chairman,

If we are to accelerate progress towards the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and other social development goals and ensure that recovery from the global crises is sustainable, we must re-examine and broaden the scope of our global partnership for development.

We agree with the report on the World Social Situation 2013 that the international trade agenda must support measures targeted towards equalizing opportunities for participation in global markets and trade agreements should be harmonized with other multilateral agreements in social development so as to form a more coherent, integrated approach.

In this regard, the Philippines continues to aspire for a global economic system that places development at the center, and one that promotes democracy in international economic decision making.

Mr. Chairman,

Governments must be encouraged to foster a development agenda that is inclusive, equitable and non-discriminatory.

Just last week, we adopted the Declaration of the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, which acknowledges the important role that migrants play as partners in the development of origin, transit, and destination countries. We need to integrate migration in the development agenda and enhance partnerships to eliminate the barriers that limit opportunities available to vulnerable groups such as migrants, and that contribute to pervasive inequalities.

Two weeks ago, we also adopted the outcome document of the High-Level Meeting on Disability and Development, which identifies concrete actions to be taken in order to address the key constraints to a disability-inclusive development. The adoption of the document provides the impetus for us all — Member states, UN agencies, civil society, academia, private sector and other stakeholders — to implement the concrete actions it had set forth and to forge stronger collaboration and partnerships for a disability-inclusive development. We have come a long way from the adoption of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabilities, the Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. All these normative frameworks together with the
outcome document should enable us to genuinely and sincerely work together for the common goal of a disability-inclusive development.

It is our hope, Mr. Chairman, that the momentum gained at the High-Level Meetings on Disability and Development and Migration and Development will ensure that in the post-2015 development framework, no vulnerable group shall be left behind.

Thank you.