STATEMENT BY

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ON

THE OCCASION OF THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE

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PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY
Mr Chairman,

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier in this hall by Fiji on behalf of the G77 and China and Ethiopia on behalf of the African Group.

May I also join other delegations in congratulating you Mr Chairman, my African brother, on your election and express the full confidence of my own delegation in your ability in steering the work of the Second Committee in the right direction.

Mr Chairman,

As the global economy struggles to grow and poverty and underdevelopment persist, the work of the Financial and Economic Committee remains crucial. This Committee is entrusted to consider vital issues related to economic growth and development, including macroeconomic policy questions, financing for development, sustainable development, and poverty eradication. As we dwell on these key issues we should assert the responsibility of the United Nations in taking a lead on global development issues.

The 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly is particularly important as it will see through the implementation of several of the Rio plus 20 outcomes including the compilation of the report by the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals; adoption of the report of the Experts of the Intergovernmental Committee on the Financing for Sustainable Development and the on-going strengthening of the institutional framework for sustainable development.

The theme for the General Assembly this year namely, “The Post-2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage” as chosen by the President of the General Assembly, could not have been more relevant. The work of the Second Committee is vital in taking forward the work of the UN on this theme.

Mr Chairman,

South Africa has consistently argued that the existing MDGs framework should be given space to run its course until the target date of 2015 and any additional development architecture must build on the MDGs framework to ensure that the development aspirations that we had set are not eclipsed by the debate on post-2015. In this context I reiterate the words of President Zuma on the 24th of September at the General Assembly who said:

“The full implementation of the MDGs remains the key priority on the development agenda for the next two years.”

As a demonstration of our commitment to the MDGs South Africa agreed to play co-facilitation role in preparation for the High-level Special Event held on the 25th of September 2013. In this regard we thank fellow member states for the support and trust that was bestowed on us to ensure that the negotiation of the outcome was a success.
This Special Event allowed us to take stock of the implementation of the MDG’s and commit ourselves to accelerate implementation in the remaining period. The outcome we adopted also set out a roadmap for the intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda.

As we prepare for this intergovernmental process, we should be mindful of the peculiarities and different circumstances of different regions around the world. It is in this context that we reiterate the importance of balancing universality in any future development framework with differentiation of responsibilities to underscore the realities of different capacities among countries of the world. In this context the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities should permeate all the development debates going forward as acknowledged by the outcomes of a number of Summits related to sustainable development.

Mr Chairman,

My delegation is deeply concerned at the world food crisis and continuing food insecurity, the volatility of capital flows and commodity prices. We view these negative developments as hindering the efforts of developing countries in their fight against poverty and quest for self-reliance. Today’s domestic challenges require collective global actions and food security is no exception.

South Africa is pleased to observe that there is emerging consensus at the United Nations level that poverty eradication will continue to be prioritised between now and the year 2015 and the period beyond. By building on the MDGs we must ensure that through concerted global efforts we will be able to eradicate poverty in the short term; improve and ensure access to universal health coverage by all; improve access and quality of water and sanitation; improve the quality of education and development of the right skills that match current and future market demands; and continue to protect the integrity of our environment to ensure that future generations are able to meet their needs and ensure equitable growth.

In this regard the Means of Implementation cannot be over-emphasized. While we acknowledge that national governments have a responsibility to meet the development needs of their own people, we maintain that there is still a dire need for international assistance to help extricate millions of people from the mould of poverty and under-development particularly in Africa. In this regard, South Africa views the articulation of Agenda 2063 as a vision for change that is driven from within the continent, for the purpose of successfully addressing the challenges and taking advantage of the opportunities for Africa’s sustainable development.

Mr Chairman,

The post-2015 UN development agenda should be closely aligned with regional priorities. To effectively engage in the post-2015 development agenda, Africa is currently developing a common position to ensure that we collectively defend our interests in the negotiations on the post-2015 development debate. It is important for Africa that there is increased foreign direct investment to ensure economic growth; industrialisation and beneficiation. Africa is endowed
with unparalleled natural resources and our development partnership should result in beneficiation to ensure job creation and skills transfer and development.

We continue to call for a timely conclusion of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations, which must be responsive to the needs and priorities of developing countries. In this connection we look forward to positive outcomes at the WTO Ministerial Conference (MC9) in Bali in December 2013.

Mr Chairman,

It is our view that the new commitments towards development must build on existing agreements. In this connection the importance of a strengthened global partnership for development, building on existing commitments, cannot be over-emphasized. The Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration reaffirm the collective commitment by Member States to address the challenges of financing for development in the spirit of global partnership. It is thus important that, in assessing the status of implementation and the tasks ahead, we should build on MDG-8 in ensuring that a global partnership for development continues as the centrepiece of cooperation for developing countries to achieve international development goals including all of the MDGs by 2015 and beyond.

The report of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for Sustainable Development Financing, on which South Africa serves, will be critically important in ensuring that a strategy is in place to ensure mobilisation of adequate resources to fulfil our commitments.

Mr Chairman,

We underscore the importance of good governance, an imperative that should permeate all the debates including the need to reform the international financial institutions to ensure that they are representative and responsive to the needs of the developing countries. Good governance should create conditions for mutual accountability for the delivery of development commitments made previously towards developing countries. Good governance should help strengthen efforts to stem tax evasion by the corporate sector and illicit financial flows from developing countries. These are serious challenges that continue to negatively affect fragile economies in the global South.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, as the work of this Committee begins, let us bear in mind that it is not business as usual. As the world grapples with its development challenges, our deliberations must contribute to the development debate in a meaningful manner.

I thank you.