Statement by Mr. Mani Prasad Bhattarai, Counsellor of the Permanent Mission of Nepal to the United Nations at the Second Committee of the Sixty-eighth session of the UN General Assembly on Agenda Item 23: Eradication of Poverty and other Development Issues

(New York, 17 October 2013)

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to address this meeting on an issue of great human concern. My delegation associates itself with the statements made by Fiji, Benin and Lao PDR on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the LDCs and LLDCs respectively. I thank the Secretary-General for the report entitled “Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)” and other relevant reports under this agenda item.

Mr. Chairman,

Global poverty remains antithetical to global sustainable development agenda and awaits a fight to finish. Indeed, eradication of poverty has become one of the most pressing challenges facing humanity today. It is a stark reality that poverty and inequality breed injustices which have serious implications in the maintenance of peace and security. There are 1.2 billion people across the globe living on less than $1.25 a day. Poverty is a multidimensional problem which manifests in lack of opportunities and employment, constraint of capabilities, inequalities and social exclusion. Growing unemployment, cuts in social spending and limited access to productive resources have tendencies to push more people into poverty. There is also a high risk of reverting back to poverty as incidences of external and internal shocks, climate-induced vulnerabilities and disasters with consequences resulting in the loss of jobs and livelihood opportunities.

In the context of intensely globalized world of today, poverty and inequality require a focused, concerted, and integrated approach to addressing its multifarious socio-economic, human and environmental dimensions. There is a need for better understanding of the fundamental problem in a comprehensive and holistic manner, taking into account the implications of poverty to political and social stability, and the fact that poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere.

Eradicating of extreme form of poverty by 2030, calls for sound socio-economic policies and programs that ensure efficient delivery of basic services, enhancing the quality of life of the poor people, and promoting economic development and social inclusion of the deprived communities at the national, regional and global levels. Nepal attaches great importance to the acceleration of the MDGs attainment by 2015 and holds the view that poverty should be at the centre of development while framing up the post-2015 development agenda and the SDGs.
Mr. Chairman,

Over the years, Nepal has been accordng top priority to poverty alleviation in its development endeavors. There has been tangible achievement in reducing extreme poverty from 42 percent in 1995 to 23.8 percent in 2013. However, nearly 7 million people are still living in extreme poverty. The gap between the rich and poor as well as urban and rural is widening. The social dimensions of poverty based on gender, ethnicities, caste and culture are becoming more complex and sensitive to handle.

Our problems are mostly associated with structural constraints such as landlockedness, difficult mountain terrains, exclusion and deprivation, lack of access of a large chunk of people to productive resources, including land, capital, skills and knowledge. Limited capacity, increased vulnerability due to internal and external shocks, supply side constraints, low investments and low employment creation have affected the overall socio-economic conditions and efforts in poverty reduction.

Despite these challenges, Nepal is committed to fighting poverty, inequality and social exclusion through appropriate policy interventions and implementation of relevant strategy and programmes. The overarching goal of the current development plan is to reduce poverty to at least 18 percent by 2015 and minimize existing inequality by increasing employment opportunities, building capacity, increasing productivity, ensuring equitable distribution system, and making development process more inclusive of the needs of the marginalized people. A commitment to reaching out to the most vulnerable and needy sections of the society, including women, children, elderly, dalits and those living in the backward regions through social protection network with significant investment in social sector.

Building productive capacity in agriculture, manufacturing and services sectors and building resilience from multiple shocks, including those of climate change is essential for Nepal to accelerate inclusive and equitable growth that can generate employment opportunities and decent work for all. Effective diffusion of science, technology and innovation into the process of change brings desirable results to this end.

Mr. Chairman,

In the recent years, remittances have become significant contributor to the economy as well as an important means for poverty alleviation, especially in the rural areas. In view of the meaningful contribution of migrant workers to the economies of both the sending and receiving countries, we attach importance to the protection of basic rights in the places of their work. Together, we believe programme for raising the level of financial literacy of the migrant workers and their families could go a long way in ensuring a better utilization of their hard-earned income.

The fight against poverty eradication requires a combined and coordinated effort at all levels. As it is a multi-dimensional problem encompassing economic, social human and environmental aspects, Nepal is doing her best to mount attacks on poverty in her development endeavors, and in this context, we need more predictable and sustainable funding through genuine partnerships to achieve results on the ground.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.