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Statement of the NGO Major Group at the Asia Pacific Sustainable Development Forum (APFSD)
19 May 2014

Good afternoon to everyone and thank you for this opportunity to share the perspective of the NGO Major Group at this Forum.

We associate with the statement read by our colleague earlier in behalf of the CSO Forum and endorse the framework of development justice. We invite you to refer to the full civil society statement that will be made available.

We would like to emphasize that for us, tackling inequality is probably the most serious challenge to sustainable development today and more so in the future.

The **grossly unequal distribution of wealth, resources and power** is the principal reason for the persistence of poverty and human deprivation despite the leaps and bounds in the aggregate growth of material wealth produced in the world. We have the fastest growing region and yet the Gini coefficient for Asia and the Pacific has increased, resulting in a reduction in social development gains by over 20 per cent. Around 15 million people die every year globally largely due to a lack of access to nutritious food, basic healthcare services, or clean water for drinking and sanitation – equivalent to more than 40,000 preventable deaths every single day. This is not due to the lack of available resources or the limits of science and technology. It is a question of distribution and justice.

Therefore we believe that **redistributive justice** must be one of the central pillars of a truly transformative Post-2015 development agenda. Governments should eliminate inequalities by redistributing the control of resources, wealth and power between and within countries, among women and men, and social groups.

We urge governments to make clear commitments for universal social protection, progressive taxation; creating decent work for all; strengthening workers rights, ensuring equitable access, ownership and control over productive assets and natural resources; ending all forms of discrimination and ensuring equal and effective participation of all people in decision-making.

Indeed, there is a need to **protect and expand the commons** by promoting community-based and public or collective forms of ownership and control over the means of production and distribution. We need to progressively ensure that peoples' access to quality public services and all the necessities for a dignified life is not determined by their purchasing power.

People in developing countries cannot realize the right to development without a **clear commitment to means of implementation and an effective global partnership based on the principle of international solidarity** with the primary

responsibility on the shoulders of governments. This must be based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities across the framework.

A fairer international system is urgently needed. The financial system needs to be seriously regulated through taxation of speculative flows, clamping down on tax havens, preventing tax competition, cancelling unsustainable debt burdens; and making finance serve sustainable development rather than maximizing profits. The WTO, trade agreements and investment treaties should be circumscribed by human rights norms and principles rather than the other way around.

We agree with the G77 proposal to have a stand-alone global goal for reducing inequality within and between every country in order to raise its visibility and focus efforts in addressing it.

At the same time we should incorporate equality targets across other goals and require disaggregated data in measuring progress towards meeting these goals and targets.

Thank you.