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**Closing Remarks by the Chair of the Group of 77, Mr. J. V. Bainimarama,**

**Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji, at the High-level Panel of Eminent Personalities of the South: The Future Landscape of South-South Cooperation**

**Natadola, Fiji 7 - 9 May 2013**

Honourable Presidents,

Honourable Prime Ministers,

Ministers, Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants,

1. Now that we have arrived at the end of our meeting, I would like to thank you all most sincerely for your productive engagement during these two days of our deliberations. I would like to express on my own behalf, as well as that of the Government of Fiji, sincere words of appreciation to all of you members of this distinguished panel for your excellent contributions. As Chair of G77 and China I say on behalf of our full membership of 132 nations, *vinaka vaka levu*, thank you very much.

2. The outcome has been very successful. We have agreed that developing countries have accumulated degrees of development capacity that can be shared and viably used through a solid platform of South-South cooperation. We heard during this meeting a number of very insightful presentations on the important subject of South-South cooperation, which is of utmost importance for the Member States of the Group of 77 and China.

3. Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

South-South Cooperation is a key element in the development agenda of our countries. It is imperative that we construct a strong platform for ourselves, harnessing political will, as we move forward. We have also emphasized that the obligation of the North to financially and technically support the South remains. Thus in the interests of global harmony, equity and development we must strengthen the development commitments of North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation. We have agreed that the current international architecture needs to be restructured in order to respond to the new realities and opportunities for development.

4. We have also agreed on the need to reinforce the co-ordination of developing countries in our policy and joint negotiating positions on major issues in the international agenda. Strengthening existing multilateral funding mechanisms for South-South Cooperation and promoting regional, inter-regional and sub-regional sectoral cooperation in strategic fields have also been identified as important determinants in this endeavor.

5. The Development Platform for the South is an invaluable tool for guiding and strengthening multilateral South-South cooperation. It will provide a pathway for the South in approaching the international economic arena. Furthermore, the Platform is a strategic tool for political guidance, a compass for the South, which contains the goals and aspirations for economic growth and prosperity in the South. It will contribute to building South-North coalitions on development and related issues of global interest such as climate change, biodiversity, natural disasters, and sustainable development in global governance. It will optimize the voice and participation of developing countries in the international fora.

6. As we look back at the interactive dialogue we have engaged here in Natadola, we can conclude without a doubt that our deliberations have been full and substantive. There was a high level of agreement that South-South cooperation can produce greater results and that time has come to invest more efforts and resources into this cooperation. In this regard, we call on the UN System and all development partners to make it a priority to promote South-South cooperation in order to secure real progress in countries of the South.

7. Let me assure you that South-South cooperation will continue to represent the best form of solidarity, self-reliance and interdependence among the members of the Group of 77 and China, and we will pursue our work with the same sense of commitment and vigour, for the unity and solidarity of the Group.

8. In conclusion, as your host, allow me to express once again our sincere thanks to all of you distinguished panel members and resource personnel for your dedication to the success of the Panel.

9. Last but not the least, let me thank Mr. Mourad Ahmia, our Executive Secretary, and his team in New York for the excellent arrangements made for the success of this Panel. My thanks also go to all of the hardworking staff of the Fiji Government who have contributed directly or indirectly to the smooth functioning of this meeting.

I wish all of you all a safe return trip home and look forward to joining you at this evening’s reception being hosted by His Excellency the President of Fiji.

Vinaka Vakalevu.