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**STATEMENT BY**

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OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**ON BEHALF**

**OF THE AFRICAN GROUP ON AGENDA ITEM 50:  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OUTCOME OF THE  
UN CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (HABITAT II)  
AND THE STRENGTHENING OF THE UN  
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME (UN-HABITAT)**

**IN THE PLENARY OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE  
DURING THE 63<sup>RD</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**ON 28<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2008,  
NEW YORK**

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**Madam Chair,**

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group on agenda item 50 titled "Implementation of the outcome of the UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)".

The African Group associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We thank the Secretary General for his informative reports on "Implementation of the outcome of the UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)" and, the "Coordinated Implementation of the Habitat Agenda.

**Madam chair,**

One of the major challenges of rapid, unplanned and unsustainable urbanization is the growth of slums and other informal settlements within and adjacent to major towns and cities. The seriousness and magnitude of slums is heightened by the fact that about 1.2 billion urban dwellers live in slums, a figure that is likely to rise exponentially if remedial measures are not taken.

Indeed, if the current trend continues, there is high possibility that some of the major cities in developing countries will soon be transformed into slums. This should not be left to happen as it will gravely undermine our efforts to achieve sustainable development particularly through implementation of the internationally agreed development goals including MDGs.

**Madam Chair**

The current food, energy and financial crises have a strong bearing on the goals of the Habitat Agenda. These alongside the challenges emanating from climate change require new and innovative approaches to urbanization. The link between food and energy crises is that urbanization affects land use, water resource management which in turn is likely to affect food production and while on the other hand, about 75 percent of the world's energy is consumed in urban areas with heavy reliance on vehicles for transport and industrial uses. Hence, it is not surprising that the food and energy crises led to widespread social unrest and political protests in almost all the regions of the world.

The financial crisis that has closely been linked to the collapse of the sub-prime mortgage market is a new phenomenon that urban development experts and policy makers should review with interest. The African Group is of the view that the UN-Habitat, supported by other stakeholders should carry out a study on the causes and implications of the crisis and share such experience with other countries that are implementing such mortgage schemes. We believe that this would help other countries avoid getting into similar problems in future by putting safeguard and regulatory measures in their policies and development planning strategies.

**Madam Chair,**

The vast majority of urban areas in African countries lack safe housing, access to water and sanitation, modern energy supply and waste collection and disposal. Urbanization also brings a wide range of social, economic and environmental problems including in consumption and production patterns. It is a threat to sustainable livelihood of mankind if unchecked.

The challenge of sustainable human settlements and adequate shelter for all requires our urgent attention, especially as it is closely linked with poverty, employment, transportation and the provision of basic services such as water and sanitation.

**Madam Chair,**

To deal with the growing challenge of urbanization, African leaders have established the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development (AMCHUD) comprising the housing Ministers of Africa. At the recent meeting held in Abuja, Nigeria on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of July 2008, the Ministers considered the challenges of housing and urbanization facing Africa. The meeting resulted in the Abuja Resolution and the Abuja Plan of Action. The Abuja Plan of Action includes important pragmatic decisions and commitments in the areas of funding, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation and, institutional and regulatory measures that can bring real change to the state of housing and urban development in Africa. The Group looks forward to the support of all stakeholders in implementing these decisions.

**Madam Chair,**

In appreciation of the progress made by UN-Habitat in implementing its programmes; the African Group wishes to point out some of the notable achievements that we see as crucial in sharpening focus and promoting implementation of UN-Habitat's mandates:

The African Group commends the UN Habitat for kick-starting the implementation of the medium-term strategic and institutional plan for 2008-2013 that was approved by its Governing Council in 2007. We hope that the plan with its goal of putting in place by 2013 the necessary policies, strategies and conditions to stabilize the growth of slums and subsequently reduce the number of slum dwellers will fast-track the achievement of the human settlements-related Millennium Development Goals.

The African Group expresses satisfaction for the progress made to date on the implementation of the Experiment Reimbursable Seeding Operation (ERSO). In particular, the group is pleased with the finalization of the ERSO Operational Procedures and Operational Manual and the establishment of the ERSO Steering and Monitoring Committee. The UN-HABITAT approach to ERSO has highlighted the pragmatic approach taken with this new opportunity to maximize the potential of ERSO.

Natural disasters considerably reduce the gains made in the area of human settlements. In this respect we take note with appreciation of the decision to admit UN-Habitat as a principal member of the Inter Agency Standing Committee.

Lastly, for UN-HABITAT to succeed it needs more than words of support, it is imperative that it be adequately supported through the provision of financial and other resources. The African Group calls on the member states of the United Nations in a position to do so, to increase their contributions to the UN-HABITAT Funds, activities and projects. In addition, we urge donors to scale up their support to UN-HABITAT's normative and operational activities.

**Madam Chair,**

In conclusion, let me repeat our strong expectation and hope that the challenges of housing and sustainable urbanization will be addressed in an integrated and coordinated manner to ensure that as countries urbanize, they do so in a manner that supports their development.

**I thank you.**