



*Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to the United Nations*

866 U.N. Plaza, Rm 304, New York, NY 10017

**STATEMENT  
BY  
H.E. AMBASSADOR ZACHARY D. MUBURI-MUITA  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF KENYA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON BEHALF  
OF THE AFRICAN GROUP  
ON  
AGENDA ITEM 53: ERADICATION OF  
POVERTY AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT ISSUES  
IN THE  
PLENARY OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE  
DURING THE 63<sup>RD</sup> SESSION  
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
ON 22<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2008,  
  
NEW YORK**

**Madam Chair,**

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group on agenda item 53 (a&b) entitled "Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)" and, Industrial Development Cooperation. The Group aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of Group of 77 and China.

**Madam Chair,**

Poverty eradication remains the greatest global challenge facing the world today and its eradication is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development to be achieved, in particular for developing countries. Even though indicators show a slight improvement in sub-Saharan Africa, progress is slow compared to other developing regions.

Reports by the Secretary-General show that poverty retreated globally over the course of the decade but emphasize that much remains to be done. The mixed results in poverty reduction have underscored the need for a better understanding of the nature and range of the deep rooted obstacles that countries face in their efforts to reduce poverty. It has become clear that national development strategies need to be broad and inclusive and that countries should adopt an integrated and holistic approach that can address poverty in all its dimensions.

**Madam Chair,**

The African Group looks upon this Committee to ensure that the Second Decade is used to reinforce the global alliances for development by coming up with innovative policies based on new realities. The Second Decade should become more than just a mere slogan. The Decade will extend beyond the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) target date of 2015 and therefore, allows us to reinvigorate our development efforts. Hence the United Nations, and indeed the international community must consider how best to supplement the work undertaken by the MDGs and have a clear baseline for follow-up.

The Second Decade therefore, would benefit from having a clear focus and direction with particular attention given to the special needs of Africa. In this regard, the African Group supports the emphasis of the Secretary-General's report on the importance of decent work as one of the positive trends and vital means of achieving the MDGs and raising living standards.

The Group believes that the Second decade can, among other things, be made more effective by strengthening the monitoring mechanisms that will allow Member States to assess progress towards the implementation of all internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The political Declaration of the recently held High Level Meeting on Africa's Development Needs called for the formulation, by the end of the 65<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly, of a mechanism to review the full and timely implementation of all commitments related to Africa's

development. Of course such a mechanism should build on existing mechanisms and ensure that Member States remain seized of the need to and efforts being made to address Africa's special development needs.

**Madam Chair,**

The Group is concerned that current economic and financial turmoil and the escalating cost of basic food stuffs and energy will have a greater negative impact on Africa than on any other region, and thereby undermine the continent's ability to achieve MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals. The vulnerability of most African countries to the direct and indirect effects of global crises would greatly affect the continent's ability to focus on its many outstanding challenges including the eradication of poverty. In this respect, it will be imperative that as the developed countries struggle to address the crises in their own countries, efforts should be made to prevent and protect developing countries from the adverse impacts of these crises.

**Madam Chair**

While the resounding solution to the current world financial crisis has been the injection of money into banks and financial institutions, it is equally important to continue to assist countries that bear no responsibility for the crisis, but are now experiencing jobs and income loss due to the ripple effects. In this regard, the Group hopes that the international community will not slacken its support to Africa and further urges developed countries that have not yet done so to use the Second Decade to honour their commitments to increase ODA to

the target of 0.7 percent of Gross National Income. Indeed, the attainment of the Internationally Agreed Development Goals including the MGDs is central to poverty eradication and hence warrant for a concrete bailout plan.

The African Group wishes to point out that, in the current institutional framework to support the internationally agreed development goals, poverty is generally considered an overarching theme. However, unlike other critical issues that are mainstreamed into United Nations work for economic and social development such as gender and sustainable development, no dedicated inter-agency mechanism currently exists to address the primary challenge of reducing poverty.

### **Madam Chair**

The African Group recognizes that there exist disparities in industrial development and performance between the various regions of the world. While the report of the Secretary-General indicates manufacturing industry is shifting from developed to a number of developing countries. It is also evident that Africa seems to benefit least from in this shift. The fact that in majority of sub-Sahara Africa countries, the share of manufacturing in Gross National Product has never exceeded 12 percent is worrying. This scenario does not auger well for poverty eradication as it appears far below threshold levels that can sustain meaningful development and hence poverty eradication.

Notwithstanding the above the importance of industrialization in endeavours to eradicate poverty cannot be underestimated, particularly during the Second Decade for eradication of Poverty.

Concerted efforts by both African countries themselves and the international community are necessary in this regard. With the support from partners in international development, industrial development can transform Africa and the other poor countries of the world. Obstacles to achieving industrial development in developing countries, particularly in Africa that include, widespread poverty, under-developed private sector, barriers to international trade, effects of climate change, digital divide, low technological advancement as well as legal and institutional challenges can be overcome with political will and commitment both at national and international levels.

Lastly, **Madam Chair**, the African Group hopes that the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty would support the internationally agreed development goals related to poverty eradication targets in an efficient and coordinated manner. The decade should be used to promote fair globalization, industrialization, employment generation, development of economic and social infrastructure, new and innovative sources of financing for development, among others. To achieve these we believe that entire United Nations system, as well as the international community will be mobilized to complement each other. Eradicating poverty in the world is a collective responsibility based on the understanding that poverty anywhere is a threat to peace, security and prosperity everywhere.

**I thank you.**