



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. ZACHARY D. MUBURI-MUITA

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF

KENYA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON

BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP DURING THE

GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE OF

THE 63RD SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Madam Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group. I take this opportunity to congratulate you and the Bureau on your election and assumption of the leadership of this important Committee. We are confident in your ability to successfully lead the Committee during its sixty-third session work. The African Group aligns itself with the statement delivered by Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Permit me, Madam Chair, to use this platform to express our appreciation to the Secretary General and the President of the General Assembly for convening the High-level meeting on **Africa's Development Needs** on 22nd September, 2008.

The African Group also commends Member States for their support and effective participation in the High-Level meeting. Africa deserves this kind of attention as it unfortunately still remains the poorest of the world's five continents. Despite its abundant resources, the continent still scores the least on almost all human development indicators.

Madam Chair,

In the twenty-first century the world possesses all the political, financial, economic and technological tools that can unleash the continent's full potential in order to create prosperity. We live in a world of plenty and abundance but we are always found wanting when we need to take a decisive action against the challenges that confront us all collectively as members of the human species. It is unfortunate that in the past few weeks, trillions of dollars have been spent in bailout packages across the developed world and yet the target of troubling aid to Africa by 2010 has not been met. To the contrary, even the current OECD statistics indicate that Official Development Assistance (ODA) levels have decreased. The question we need to ask ourselves therefore, is had the international community fully implemented all the outcomes of the major conferences and summits included Africa into global markets through full debt relief, access to markets, technology transfer, elimination of agricultural subsidies, would the global economy be in the current crisis?

As the Political Declaration on Africa's Development Needs recognizes, poverty and social deprivation remains the greatest challenge facing the world today and there is a dire need to attain sustainable growth and development to overcome them. In terms of rhetorical response, the international community has responded favourably through affirming and reaffirming various commitments ostensibly to address the development needs of Africa. However, the full and timely implementation of all commitments made to Africa is yet to be achieved.

The African Group acknowledges the efforts and assistance our development partners have provided to support the continent's development efforts. Some progress has been made. Even in many African countries there are visible signs of progress in mobilization of domestic resources for development, creative development strategies, development assistance and direct investments. Significant advances have also been made in democratic governance, rule of law, protection of human rights and in resolving long standing conflicts on the continent to create conducive environment for achieving sustainable development.

However, the world cannot also delude itself about the stark reality that Africa remains off-track to achieve the MDGs, as well as other internationally agreed development goals. There is a serious shortfall in available resources to meet Africa's development needs.

Madam Chair,

Africa believes strongly that there are sufficient commitments on the table to get the continent back on track. In this respect, there may be no need for new commitments to deal with debts, shortfalls in ODA, as well as HIV-AIDS, malaria and other infectious diseases. The Doha Development Round remains stalled not because we doubt the potential of trade as the engine for economic growth and development. What is lacking is the political will to do the necessary: implementation of various commitments contained in the numerous multi-stakeholder global mechanisms like the Monterrey Consensus among others. It is Africa's hope that through this and future sessions, the United Nations will endeavour to realise the need and importance of establishing a mechanism for follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of commitments on Africa as clearly captured in the political declaration on Africa's development needs.

Climate change is exacerbating ecological threats and threatening livelihoods in many African countries. Africa has contributed the least to the green-house gas emissions but is the most affected by impacts of climate change. Yet there is unwillingness to **unconditionally** provide resources needed for adaptation measures. As greenhouse gas emissions relentlessly surge and continue to warm the climate, the international community is still spending a lot of resources in conference rooms debating over responsibilities we are not oblivious of.

The current food and energy price crisis and the evolving financial crisis are challenges that this committee should put in perspective during its deliberations. As we all may be aware, the most affected by these crises are the poorest, most of who are in Africa. Already it is estimated that the majority of the countries severely hit by the current food crisis and require international assistance are in Africa. In addition, in the event that the evolving financial crisis is not addressed urgently and comprehensively, there is no doubt that its effects will spread and severely affect other countries particularly the developing countries in Africa as well as other regions.

In addition, let me point out the need to put into consideration the forthcoming important conferences, thus, the review conference on the Implementation of the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development scheduled to be held in Doha, Qatar, from 29th November to 2nd December, 2008 and the 14th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to be held in Poznan, Poland from 1-12th December, 2008. We particularly wish to note the fact that the focus of these conferences closely relates to the work of the Second Committee during this session and hence the need to ensure that the discussions and resolutions of the Committee complement and do not pre-empt the outcome of these conferences.

Madam Chair,

The challenges confronting Africa remains daunting. Nonetheless, the African Group still believes that the commitments made over the years to address these challenges still remain viable and relevant. What is needed is to unite as a twenty-first century community of nations to denounce the disproportionate lack of practical responses to address this development emergency for the sake of humanity and posterity.

Madam Chair, the African Group remains committed to the work of the Second Committee in moving forward the development agenda of the United Nations and will contribute its quota to enrich the committee's discussions during this session.

12. I thank you all for your attention.