

**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT MISSION OF DJIBOUTI
DURING THE THEMATIC DISCUSSION ON AFRICA**

**SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT (CSD-16) ON 8TH MAY 2008, NEW YORK**

Chairperson,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group. The Group aligns itself with the statement of the G77 and China made by Antigua and Barbuda.

Chairperson:

It is unfortunate that Africa is the only continent which is off-track in meeting the targets of the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals. Even though Africa's economic growth rate has increased it is still lower than the population growth rate. In fact, if Africa is to reach the core Millennium Development Goals of halving the number of people living on less than US\$1 a day by 2015, it must achieve a sustained economic growth rate of 7 per cent a year.

Chairperson:

I wish to underline that various concrete actions made by African countries to reduce poverty, improve access to adequate water supply, achieve food security and expand exports are severely undermined by inadequate and underdeveloped infrastructure, coupled with land degradation, desertification and climate change. Furthermore, the recent crisis of food prices, threaten the food security in African countries.

The NEPAD programme has been set up as a primary vehicle for the implementation of sustainable development programmes in Africa. As outlined in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), a key element is the setting up of the African Peer Review Mechanism to support the ongoing improvements of the governance, peace and security efforts in African countries. Africa has focused agriculture and rural development through the NEPAD Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) as well as the peer review mechanisms.

Chairperson:

Since the United Nations adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the turn of the millennium in which world leaders pledged to “spare no efforts to free our fellow men and women from the abject and dehumanizing conditions of extreme poverty, to which more than a billion of them are currently subjected”, it has emerged that global poverty reduction has varied from region to region.

Chairperson,

Despite various efforts by individual countries in their small way to meet the MDG targets, Africa, is least likely to reach the poverty reduction targets by 2015 despite progress being made in a few individual countries. Many people in our region continue to survive on less than US\$1 a day. At the G8 summit held at Glen Eagles in July, 2005 parties agreed to a plan of action and commitments of each other. These commitments for fulfillment of necessary conditions were strongly reaffirmed at the African Union Summit.

The G8 in return agreed to a comprehensive plan to support Africa's progress. The agreement included provision of extra resources over and above 0.7% of GDP to support Africa's in meeting their challenges. Despite the promises and the fact that African countries met their commitment, the other part with few exceptions has not fulfilled the promise. We believe that the challenges that have been constantly referred to still demand attention. We are of the view that the international community should support Africa in the following area:

On Trade,

The stalled Doha Round is risking the development dimension of the round which is crucial for the developing countries particularly Africa. It further reinforces the urgent need to guarantee an equitable fair international trading system, one that would safeguard the interest of developing countries, especially Africa for duty free and quota free market access and the elimination of agricultural subsidies. On trade capacity building, the Group calls for the operationalization for the Aid for Trade Initiative and assisting African countries to add value to their products.

DEBT

The debt problem of African countries especially debt-servicing is exacerbated by factors beyond their controls. Uncertainty in domestic

production, volatility in international prices and deteriorating terms of trade often make our debt-burden unsustainable. The continued external debt burden greatly aggravates the poverty trap in the Africa. We believe that it is time to eradicate multilateral and bilateral debt if we seriously intend to help the region. We must renew and strengthen our efforts to make the debt-relief initiative more inclusive.

On ODA:

It is disappointing to note that the ODA, net of debt relief, declined in 2006 to 0.25 percent of the gross national income (GNI) of DAC group. This is down from 0.26 per cent in the previous year. This was well below the 0.33 percent level that was reached in the early 1990s and far below the 0.7 percent target as reaffirmed in Monterrey. We call upon the OECD countries to fulfill their commitment of 0.7 of their GNP as ODA to developing countries and 0.20 percent to LDCs as early as possible.

Technology transfer and capacity building:

The international community must assist African countries gain access to environmentally sound technologies which include know-how, procedures, goods and services, and equipment as well as organizational and managerial procedures. These technologies, as Agenda 21 stipulates, should be compatible with nationally determined socio-economic, cultural and environmental priorities, and enable the transfer of necessary technological know-how as well as building up of economic, technical, and managerial capabilities.

The African Group reaffirms the call to the international community, to provide financial resources to assist in the transfer of technology for adaptation and building capacity for technology needs assessment, in particular in Africa, to enable the continent to make choices based on environmentally sound technologies.

Chairperson:

We are grateful to the United Nations and the broader International Community for the support that they have indicated to the high level meeting on Africa scheduled to take place on September 22nd this year. We hope, as we refocus attention on Africa, the meeting under the chairmanship of the President of the General Assembly will review and assess the scope and adequacy of international commitment and support to Africa's development at all levels.

Chairperson,

As we prepare for the conference on Financing for Development due to take place in Doha this November we look forward that the special needs of Africa be adequately reflected in the outcome of this meeting.

In this particular cycle of the CSD, the African Group therefore proposes that a mechanism be set up to verify measure and report on the status of implementation of all commitments.

I thank you Chairperson.