

Fifth session of the General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (New York, 26 November 2013)

Statement on behalf of the African Group by H.E. Mr. Nelson Messone, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Gabon to the United Nations, on: “Energy”

Co-Chairs,

1. I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on behalf of the African Group.
2. The Group acknowledges the presence of Mr. Adnan Amin, Director-General, International Renewable Energy Agency, Professor Daniel Kammen from University of California, Berkeley and Professor Vijay Modi from Columbia University. I would like also to take this opportunity to thank the Technical Support Team (TST) for the useful “issues brief” it has prepared.
3. At the outset, the African Group would like to underscore that energy is a critical to achieving the overarching goal of poverty eradication.

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4. We would like to remind you of this staggering fact: the 48 countries of Sub-Saharan Africa (with a combined population of 800 million) generate roughly the same amount of power as Spain (with a population of 45 million)! It is important to recall that only one in four Africans has access to modern energy sources such as electricity. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA) World Energy Outlook, 1.3 billion people lack access to electricity and 2.7 billion people are without clean cooking facilities; of which, a great number if not the majority are Africans living in rural areas. And IEA projections for 2030 are even more alarming.
5. The African Group would like to underline the efforts led by the continent towards the three (3) objectives of the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4ALL) initiative to overcome its energy deficits and achieve sustainable development. Beyond the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA), Africa’s contribution includes the development of SE4ALL action plan guidelines, a policy framework for sustainable charcoal, and a strategy for decentralized energy services that are to be adopted. In addition a SE4ALL Africa Hub was launched in May to coordinate and facilitate the initiative implementation on the continent.
6. The issue of funding remains critical in that regard. Public funding remains necessary but should be complemented by other resources. No effort must be spared to fill the financial gap, including through ODA, increased public-private partnerships and the creation of conditions conducive to investments.
7. Furthermore, now that many African countries have embarked on pursuing a new growth model, harnessing renewable sources of energy is paramount to address the growing demand for energy

in the continent. An important work of assessment analyses and energy mix scenarii is being conducted in that regard.

8. The Group therefore welcomes the declaration of the 2014-2024 decade as the “UN Decade of Sustainable Energy for All”. With more than 70 government engaged with and US\$50 billion committed to the initiative, we formulate the wish that these converging international efforts focusing on energy poverty will help to contain its negative impact. Again, we are calling for a more conducive global dialogue and the creation of new and balanced business models. As stated in the TST Issue Brief on Energy: “Without access to sustainable energy services, other development goals cannot be achieved”.
9. With regard to Africa, it would be an illusion to consider development without energy, a key factor for sustained and inclusive economic growth, infrastructure development and industrialization. Moreover, there is no doubt that energy has a multiplier effect on other objectives related to poverty reduction, education, health, women’s empowerment, environment, agriculture and food security to name a few.
10. To conclude, the African Group would like to reiterate its attachment to a stand-alone goal on structural transformation, sustained economic growth, industrialization, infrastructure and energy.

I thank you.