

Statement by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group
General Debate on the Annual Report of the High
Commissioner for Human Rights (Item 2)

4th March 2010

Mr. President,

I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the African Group.

The African Group would like to thank the High Commissioner on the presentation of her annual report and for the introductory statement just made. We appreciate the efforts of the High Commissioner and her corps of dedicated staff who execute their work with the desired sense of diligence and professionalism. Also worthy of commendation are the support services offered by the OHCHR to the work of the Human Rights Council, particularly in the implementation of its various resolutions and decisions.

We recognize the increase in the responsibilities of the OHCHR particularly in facilitating the work of special procedures mandate holders, whose number has now increased to 55. We are conscious of the value of the input of the special procedures and support their immense contribution to the work of the Council, in accordance with their mandates. The Code of Conduct for Special Procedures, which was adopted by the Human Rights Council, was envisaged to enhance the independence of special procedures within the parameters of established rules and practices.

Consequently, the African Group wishes to reiterate the principled position that the United Nations system is guided by rules and procedures and it is incumbent on us all to ensure that experts appointed to contribute to the work and functioning of its numerous mechanisms strictly abide by this norm. More so, even States are guided by established rules and procedures set for themselves.

Mr. President,

The African Group recognises the increasing work load of the treaty body system which understandably poses enormous challenges to the OHCHR. We are aware that the work load

might even increase further with the increase in the number of ratifications/accession to various international human rights instruments as a result of recommendations emerging from the UPR process. We therefore support the High Commissioner's call for a commensurate increase in funds to meet up with the mounting challenges.

We note the six priority areas on which the OHCHR will focus its attention in the next biennium. We appreciate the sharing of this information at an informal setting in November last year. Our previous comments on the matter are still relevant and we hope that they will be subsequently put into account. However, it is the Group's hope that this gesture will be sustained and subsequently formalised. In this regard, we would like to reiterate the Group's call that in future the Office presents its Strategic Management Plan at a formal setting of the Human Rights Council, for the input of all concerned before its formal publication. This, in our view, will ensure transparency and allow for the participation of all Member States and other stakeholders and also strengthen the relationship between the Council and the OHCHR. In this connection, it is essential to be mindful of existing regulations particularly the GA resolutions 48/141 and 60/251 as well as the reports of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU).

The African Group appreciates the role of the OHCHR in the successful outcome of the Durban Review Conference against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance held in 2009. Consequently, the African Group particularly urges the High Commissioner to continue to take all required actions expected of her Office to facilitate the implementation of the Outcome Document of the Durban Review, other Durban mechanisms and to encourage states to take effective actions in that regard. follow-up

On the issue of migration, we welcome the advocacy role of the OHCHR in ensuring that the rights of migrants, irrespective of their status, are guaranteed. We encourage the High Commissioner to continue her efforts in this direction.

Mr. President,

For us in the African Group, the issue of the realization of the right to development is among our major concerns. It is therefore encouraging to know that the issue remains of great

importance in the work of the OHCHR. We shall continue to pursue the promotion and realization of this extremely important right and we hope that subsequent meetings of the relevant mechanisms on this subject will lead all concerned to reaching the much desired consensus. The African Group wishes to express its readiness to collaborate with Member States of the United Nations and other stakeholders in having a befitting commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development.

The African Group notes the efforts of the High Commissioner in achieving equitable geographical representation in the staff of her Office. However the disparity in the percentage of representation of each regional group is still gapping. It would be appreciated if this disparity would be addressed in accordance with the recommendation of the Joint Inspection Unit.

In conclusion, Mr. President, the African Group would like to refer to the cooperation between the OHCHR and the African Union Commission and in this regard, welcomes your recent visit to Addis Ababa during which a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the AU. This framework, we hope, will facilitate the achievement of the human rights goals and objectives in the region. We wish to reassure of Africa's commitment to continue to work with all concerned in the promotion and protection of human rights globally.

I thank you.

