

Permanent Observer Mission of the
AFRICAN UNION to the
United Nations



Mission Permanente d'Observation
de l'UNION AFRICAINE auprès des Nations
Unies

الاتحاد الأفريقي

UNIÃO AFRICANA

305 East 47th Street, New York, NY 10017 Tel. (212) 319 5490 Fax (212) 319-7135/319-6509

STATEMENT BY

**H.E. MR. MOHAMED MAHMOUD OULD EL GHAOUTH
AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MAURITANIA TO
THE UNITED NATIONS**

CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN GROUP FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE 2005

**ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP
AT THE**

**INFORMAL MEETING OF THE PLENARY ON THE HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY
MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF SEPTEMBER 2005**

NEW YORK, JUNE 30, 2005

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**STATEMENT OF THE AFRICAN GROUP
INFORMAL MEETING OF THE PLENARY ON THE HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY
MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF SEPTEMBER 2005**

Mr. President,

On behalf of the African Group, I wish to congratulate you and the Facilitators for the efficient and effective manner that you have handled our discussions.

The African Group welcomes the Draft Outcome of the High Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly of September 2005 and notes with appreciation that the document has taken into consideration some of the concerns of Africa. This statement therefore would address those issues not comprehensively addressed in the Draft Outcome Document, which are of particular concern to Africa. The African Group however reserves the right to provide further inputs on the various elements of the Draft Outcome Document.

In its preliminary overview, the African Group notes that the Draft Outcome Document espouses a South-North dimension and therefore wishes to see more of the South-South and Triangular cooperation arrangements.

The African Group is of the view that the draft outcome document needs to include the establishment of an implementation review and monitoring mechanism designed to ensure that the agreement reached at the High Level Plenary Meeting is translated into concrete action.

With regard to the Chapter on Values and Principles, the Group wishes to stress on the importance and the centrality of the state in the international system. There is need to protect the concept of national sovereignty. In this context the Group wishes to propose that this chapter should be strengthened to reflect the principles enshrined in Articles 1 and 2 of the United Nations Charter on purposes and principles, respectively.

The African Group wishes to emphasize the need to address the issue of governance at both national and international levels and stresses on the need to apply the rule of law at both national and international levels. In this connection, Africa has shown the way by adopting and applying, in the context of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, the African Peer Review Mechanism.

Mr. President,

The African Group has on many occasions stressed the centrality of development issues as we prepare for the High-level Plenary Meeting of September 2005. The Group therefore notes with appreciation the efforts undertaken by you, Mr. President, and the Facilitators in ensuring a comprehensive draft document that encompasses most of the concerns of the African Group and the wider United Nations membership.

In addition to the proposals contained in the Draft Outcome Document, the African Group wishes to highlight the need for genuine international cooperation and partnership to ensure a human-centered approach to development. This entails the promotion of international cooperation premised on the principles of mutual respect and common but differentiated responsibilities.

The African Group welcomes the inclusion of the section on meeting the Special Needs of Africa in the Draft Outcome Document. There is indeed urgent need to address these special needs of Africa through effective implementation of the NEPAD programmes and projects, the direct support for regional programmes and the promotion of regional integration.

While noting the timely initiative to cancel the multilateral debt of 14 African countries, the African Group further stresses that meeting the special needs of Africa would entail debt cancellation for all African countries in order to free resources from debt servicing to scale-up investments in social, agricultural, productive and public sectors that are essential for the achievement of the MDGs.

Mr. President,

The African Group also stresses the importance of addressing youth unemployment especially in countries emerging from conflict. The support for the public sector, education and science and technology in generating employment for the youth is important for income generation and political as well as social stability. The integral role of the youth who make up large percentages of the populations in African countries is essential in meeting the MDGs. Support for youth-focused programmes would alleviate the problem of youth unemployment and targeted programmes for youth in countries emerging from conflict would ensure the integration of the youth in the development process.

The African Group welcomes the efforts of some of the developed partners to draw up timetables to meet the long-standing commitment of 0.7 per cent of GNI for ODA, including 0.15 to 0.20 percent of GNI commitments to Least Developed Countries. We urge donor countries that have not yet done so, to make efforts to announce their target dates. Furthermore, we call on donors to align their aid with recipient countries' national development strategies.

Financing for development is necessary and critical for the achievement of the MDGs. The African Group thus supports the initiatives aimed at elaborating on the innovative sources of financing for development such as the International Financial Facility and the global tax for development. It is however important to note that remittances from migrants should not be considered as alternative sources of financing for development in the public sectors as they are meant for private purposes without concrete indication on their role in supporting investment in the productive sectors of the economy. It is equally important to stress the need to operationalize the World Solidarity Fund as indicated in the Draft Outcome Document.

Mr. President,

The Draft Outcome Document should also include a decision to provide immediate duty-free and quota-free market access for all exports from African countries as well as addressing tariff and non-tariff barriers that hinder the capacity of African countries to be fully integrated in the global market. In addition, the issues reflected in the July Package of the Doha Development Round as well as issues of an open rule-based multilateral trading system need to be addressed comprehensively. Thus the African Group would like our leaders to give clear guidance to the Hong Kong Meeting of Trade Ministers to conclude the Doha Round on time and with positive results.

The African Group believes that the Quick Wins Initiative is appropriate as a means of advancing progress in the achievement of the MDGs, it is however important, that these initiatives also address agricultural productivity which forms the backbone of most African economies. Quick Wins in the agricultural sector would provide a sustainable tool for addressing poverty and has the potential of replicating achievements in most of the MDGs.

We take note of the inclusion in the Draft Outcome Document of the crucial role of Migration and the need for international cooperation on this matter. In this regard, the African Group stresses the need to encourage member states to ratify and apply terms of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families as a means of promoting international cooperation on Migration.

Africa is experiencing rapid urbanization and accompanying rapid growth of slums. This trend is expected to continue in the coming years. We therefore need to redouble our efforts in order to ensure adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development. In view of the above, we would like to see a more prominent coverage of human settlements issues in the outcome document and in the agenda of the United Nations. The support of the international community will be required in the mobilization of more resources for investments in housing and housing related infrastructure. Along the same lines we would like to see more priority given to slum prevention and slum upgrading.

Mr. President,

The African Group emphasizes the need to ensure the full implementation of the commitments made in the UN framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. It is also important to ensure greater political and financial support to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification for the promotion of sustainable development.

The African Group reiterates its support for the establishment of a Peace Building Commission as outlined in the Draft Outcome Document and looks forward to further elaboration on the mandate, composition and modalities for its effective operation.

The African Group stresses the importance of the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguard system including comprehensive safeguards agreements and also the Model Additional Protocols. However, the African Group does not desire to see international efforts towards achieving the universality of comprehensive safeguards wither in favor of pursuing additional measures and restrictions on non-nuclear-weapon states, which are already committed to non-proliferation norms and have renounced the nuclear weapons option.

The African Group stresses the need for security assurances by the Nuclear Weapons States to the non nuclear weapons States. The Group further stresses the need to strengthen the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to enable it to fulfill its mandate effectively.

Regarding the issue of human rights and the rule of the law, the group strongly believes it is of paramount importance to invest on human and civic rights education at all levels. Education should primarily target the most vulnerable people within the communities. Concerning the proposed Human Rights Council, the Group is of the view that there is need for establishment of mechanisms to ensure the effectiveness of the human rights machinery. The Group is actively considering its position on this issue.

Finally, Mr. President,

On the question of the reform of the Security Council, the African Group wishes to reiterate the Common African Position as contained in the *Ezulwini Consensus*.

I thank you.