STATEMENT

BY

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AMBASSADOR/PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AND

VICE-PRESIDENT UNICEF BUREAU

DURING

THE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION 2013

OF THE

EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN
FUND (UNICEF)

Tuesday, February 5, 2013
United Nations, New York
Mr. President,

I thank you, Mr. President for giving me the floor. I speak today on behalf of the African Group. I congratulate you on your election to lead the UNICEF Executive Board in 2013. Having served on the bureau with your delegation in 2012 I am confident that this board shall benefit from your wide experience and expertise once again. I also congratulate my fellow Vice-Presidents on their election.

I thank the outgoing bureau for a job well done in 2012 and extend a hand of welcome to all the new members of the Executive Board 2013.

This Board is to many of us the most substantive and engaging Board of the UN system. The Africa Group, therefore, looks forward to working with all members during this and the forthcoming sessions to enable UNICEF to maintain its standards and continue its tradition of excellence.

Mr. President,

The African Group appreciates the intuitive and insightful presentation made by the Executive Director, Mr. Anthony Lake. The Group thanks him not only for his exemplary leadership at UNICEF but also for his strong advocacy on behalf of children worldwide.

Allow me at this juncture, Mr. President, to welcome Mr. Jim Yong Kim, the President of The World Bank, to our Executive Board. His presence is special and, I believe, unprecedented. The World Bank has had a long, rich and varied history with UNICEF, as it has with Africa, and so we welcome the Pres. of the bank here among us today. The African Group has keenly listened to his remarks and is enthusiastic of the opportunity that this interaction presents.

For us the presence of the president of the bank among us signals a number of important things:

First, that the work of the multilateral system, both at the United Nations and at the financial institutions of the Bretton Woods, is moving in unison, symbiotically and with coherent synergy, something that African countries have clamored for a very long time.

Second, it signals that the global agenda for development now recognizes that children and the most vulnerable in our societies have to be at the center of the global agenda because we now know that by targeting children and the most vulnerable, we guaranteed the right foundation for all development irrespective of country, sector or aspirational vision.

Third, I believe it signals that we now recognize that although ability is universal opportunity is not. Good development must help bridge the gap between ability and opportunity. This is important for children the world over. One of the primary ways for
development to do this is to focus on equity. The World Bank and UNICEF can help Africa, the least developed countries and indeed the world bridge the ability - opportunity divide by focusing on equity. Closing the gap would help attain meaningful, accelerated, sustainable development that would transform the lives of children and the most vulnerable.

Mr. President,

The World Bank's resources and influence are crucial to UNICEF’s global agenda for children; children, Mr. President, need the World Bank as their ally. Equally too the Bank needs UNICEF's vision and its example of programming with equity for balanced development based on targeted, time bound, monitorable goals that are focused on social outcomes. The African Group recognizes that in order to achieve excellence in delivery of results for children, the UN must remain focused and enhance meaningful collaboration with agencies both within and without the UN system. It is in this regard, that we urge for continued partnerships that harness the complementarities and synergies brought about by increased partnerships and make efficient use of the accompanying financial inflows to better improve delivery to children.

Mr. President,

2013 will be an important year for UNICEF and the entire United Nations System. One, we have before us the implementation of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review. Two, the work on defining the High Level Forum on Sustainable Development is underway. Three, work has started on defining the post 2015 MDG agenda. Four, member states will soon commence work on the Sustainable Development Goals, goals that are expected to define and transform the future global development agenda and five, work on Financing Sustainable Development Objectives, something I imagine the World Bank will be interested in, also commences. All these five processes will redefine future outcomes for children and the development work of the United Nations. We therefore urge UNICEF to stand front and center in the UN’s engagements of this work to ensure that that the Promise for Children is not only renewed but kept and attained.

Our continued collective engagement on priorities for children has to be guided by how we define and achieve development, the processes and management tools we employ to monitor results and the facilitation of financing to realize them. The African Group wants to thank UNICEF for holding workshops on the results framework of the forthcoming Strategic Plan 2014-2017. These wide ranging consultations, particularly with experts from various capitals were useful in getting ‘practical feedback’ from programme countries, feedback that we hope will help UNICEF to engage in the five processes enumerated above.
Mr. President,

Work on the MDGs still continues in Africa. The discussions on the MDGs post-2015 United Nations Development Framework are therefore of great importance to us. The objective of the UN Framework must therefore be to ensure that we protect investments and gains made so far while mobilizing new resources for new and additional investments including for children. In this regard the African Group urges that the UN Framework focuses on strengthening of UN institutional and country-level capacities in order to make UN organizations more relevant to our development needs.

Mr. President,

It may be recalled that in 2005, the General Assembly called for a systematic evaluation of the United Nations operational activities by assessing the operational activities’ impact on sustainable development. It also emphasized the importance of national ownership and capacity development. Improving accountability requires better monitoring and evaluation throughout the programming cycle accompanied by prompt transmission of the results to decision makers. These results should also be an opportunity to learn from experience and sharpen interventions. The African Group is convinced that UNICEF’s MoRES is the tool that can help achieve this outcome.

Mr. President,

Our recent deliberation on the 2014 integrated budget, including on cost recovery methodology and rates, has to be calibrated in the context of business models that UNICEF has adopted because of its unique institutional character. All organizations have an obligation to implement the principle of full cost recovery as outlined in the QCPR. The African Group constructively engaged in the joint consultations last week. The engagement was predicated on the principle of proportionality on cost recovery between core and non-core resources and ensuring that core resources do not subsidize non-core. In line with the decision adopted at the UNDP/UNOPS Executive board, we shall adopt a general cost recovery rate of 8%. The African Group believes that any higher rate may jeopardize UNICEF’s resource base. We hope that during the review of the methodology and rate in 2016, and with the agencies having trimmed down their business processes and kept management expenditure at optimum, we may reduce the rate even further.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let me emphasis a well known fact. What Africa wants from its developments partners is partnership to attain accelerated, inclusive and equitable development that secures the future for its children. That is why we are here. That’s why we engage in this board. The African Group would like to commend UNICEF for their work and pledges to remain engaged to help the organization carry out its mandate.

I thank you.