SESSION ANNUELLE 2017 DU CONSEIL D'ADMINISTRATION DU FONDS DES NATIONS UNIES POUR L’ENFANCE (UNICEF)

*(NEW YORK, 13-16 JUIN 2016)*

DEclaration of the African Group

Prononcée par :

Son Excellence Monsieur Eric Y. TIARE

*Ambassadeur*

*Représentant Permanent*

*New York, le 13 juin 2017*

*(Check against delivery)*
Mister Chair,

On behalf of the Group of African States, I would like to congratulate you for your leadership at the head of our Board and assure you of the Group's support for the smooth running of our work.

Allow me also to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Anthony Lake, the Director-General of UNICEF for his constant commitment to the cause of the child, which has resulted in significant progress.

Mister Chair,

The holding of this Annual Session is particularly important in the sense that it is taking place in the context of the elaboration of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 and the review of the annual report on the implementation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan, 2014-2017.

For the African Group, these different themes, as well as those relating to the annual report of the Executive Director, 2016, to UNICEF report on the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit and to the cooperation under UNICEF programs, provide us with the opportunity to measure progress in the field of children, to identify policy directions and to identify challenges for future actions.

It is an opportunity for the African Group to welcome the relevance of the 2016 report of the Executive Director on "Performance and results, including a report on the implementation of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review" Which reflects the important progress made and unveils the immensity of the challenges still to be met.

Indeed, according to the report, enormous progress has been made. Therefore:
- the number of children dying before their fifth birthday declined from 12.7 million in 1990 to 5.9 million in 2015;
- the number of malnourished children has fallen by almost half since 1990 ;
- the primary school net enrollment rate in low- and middle-income countries reached 91% in 2015, etc.
In spite of this considerable progress, there are still considerable challenges to be faced in the light of the data provided in the report, which shows that:
- 61 million primary school-aged children are out of school;
- 156 million children under five years of age are stunted;
- 1 in 10 girls have suffered sexual violence.

This is compounded by the fact that millions of children find themselves out of their homes because of war, violence and the effects of natural disasters and climate change.

The African Group notes with interest that children born in sub-Saharan Africa will be twelve (12) times more likely than those in high-income countries to die before the age of five. Also, African children are counted among the 300 million children living in slums.

In addition, the rapid demographic shifts and the growing youth bulge in Africa require the scaling up of essential services for children in order to take better advantage of the demographic dividend in Africa.

Mister Chair,

The complexity of the difficulties and the immensity of the challenges must not make us lose sight of the formidable work carried out by UNICEF and its partners all over the world.

The African Group notes with satisfaction the contribution of UNICEF to the following initiatives:

- “H6 network for the Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health(2016-2030)”;
- “Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria”;
- “Countdown to 2030 for Maternal, Newborn and Child Survival”...

The Group welcomes the inclusion in the UNICEF agenda of major emerging issues such as humanitarian issues, the inclusion of people with disabilities in the various programs, and the Adolescents for greater coherence in action.
The African Group remains convinced that the review of evaluation, internal audit and investigations 2016 annual report will lead to recommendations aiming to rationalize best available resources for more actions on the ground.

Also, consideration of various issues such as reports on the Executive Board field visits and the forthcoming adoption of draft decisions will allow for better ownership and sharing of best practices. This will enable us to make relevant decisions to guide our future actions.

Mister Chair,

In our quest to improve the living conditions of children, we must work in synergy and in consultation with innovative approaches.

For doing so, the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the African Union's Agenda 2063, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants are opportunities for national, regional and international action to promote and protect children's human rights throughout the world in accordance with our common commitment to leave no one behind.

The African Group, through my voice, hopes that the conclusions we will reach will contribute to a qualitative impact on our social and economic policies for the well-being of children.

I thank you for your attention!