Statement

By

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Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the African Group, I would like to congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your election to preside over the work of this Committee.

The African Group would like to associate itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Fiji on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

The theme of this year’s General Assembly could don’t have been more fitting to deliberate on the world’s pressing challenges and to lay the basis to restructuring the nature of international development cooperation for years to come.

Over the past few weeks, we have made significant progress in addressing issues that had been neglected from the global development agenda in the past. In this regard, disability and international migration now seemed to have been given the attention they deserve in formulating the next generation of goals for galvanizing global cooperation for sustained development. And just yesterday, we concluded the Sixth High-Level Dialogue on Financing for Development. The dialogue could not been more timely for reasons which I have already alluded above, and for strongly emphasizing the need to uphold the foundations of the global partnership for development as set out in Monterrey Consensus and the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development.

Nonetheless, we still have much to do to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. The international community has not fully delivered on many of the commitments. ODA, which is one of the main sources of financing development in developing countries, has declined for two consecutive years. What needs to be highlighted more is the decline exhibited in the amount of assistance that goes to the least developed countries.
If we, therefore, want the next global development agenda to succeed—which essentially means progress in eradicating poverty—the commitments made in Monterrey, and in the other United Nations conferences and summits, must urgently be fulfilled. In terms of quick wins, it makes sense to focus on expediting the implementation of the MDGs in the time remaining and this must be scaled up and accelerated while sustaining the progress achieved so far.

Mr. Chairman,

Much is expected from our committee this year. We should assume greater responsibility in building momentum between now and 2015. The agenda items that we will be dealing with in our committee are all paramount, and hence the outcomes of our negotiations will have important bearings on the challenges we face and contributing enormously to the process of formulating the new global development agenda.

The Africa Group, in this regard, stands ready to engage constructively during the work of this committee in the coming months. While we reaffirm our commitment in this respect, we would like to bring to the attention of this committee some of the issues that are of great importance to our Group which we attach vital importance to during the work of this committee.

Poverty and food security remain at the center of our continent’s development agenda. It is true that some of the countries in Africa have made remarkable progress in this regard. However, many more are still struggling with new and emerging challenges threatening to reverse their hard-fought development gains. The development of the agricultural sector is central to address poverty and food insecurity, and in the long-run, transform Africa’s economy. It is in this spirit that we call upon our partners to fulfill their commitments, particularly the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition so as to achieve the target of lifting 50 million people out of poverty in sub-Saharan Africa by 2022.
It is also known that three-fifth of the countries in Africa belongs to the least developed countries which are extremely vulnerable to external shocks. It is critical that this group of countries, and others in the continent, continue to rebuild their fiscal buffers to counter the effects of the current global economic slowdown. The international community must also provide the necessary support, particularly to enable the least developed, landlocked and small island developing countries to build their productive capacities so as to bring about structural transformation, eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development.

The necessary assistance should also be given to African countries to strengthen the capacity of their institutions so that they can effectively carry out the task of collecting public revenues.

In similar vein, climate change continues to pose a serious threat, not only to our continent, but also to other developing countries that don’t have the means or capacity to effectively adapt to and mitigate its effects. Africa, which virtually contributes nothing to climate change, continues to be affected the most. We, the Africa Group, are of the view that more efforts must be made in the subsequent meetings of the conference of the parties so as to reach a legally binding agreement by 2015. It is with high hope, therefore, that we anticipate that a major breakthrough will be achieved in Warsaw next month and Lima next year so as to bring the work of the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action to a fruitful conclusion.

Furthermore, we call upon developed countries to fulfill their commitment of mobilizing 100 billion dollars per year for the Green Climate Fund by 2020. Without adequate resources, it is hardly possible especially for African countries to implement national adaptation programmes in a sustainable manner.
Mr. Chairman,

Infrastructure deficit is also one of the most serious challenges we Africans face. It is therefore critical for us to aggressively implement regional programmes such PIDA to address the challenges surrounding the sector and strengthen regional integration. The support of our development partners in this front is much needed.

Likewise, 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. We, therefore, believe that achieving the three objectives of the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative helps Africa overcome its energy deficits and achieve sustainable development. Value addition is a must for Africa to come out of poverty. This can be achieved only when there is sufficient access to modern and affordable energy.

As you all recall, it is in line with the same spirit of averting from the business-as-usual scenario that we all agreed to pursue global sustainable development at the RIO+20 Summit last year. As per the outcome of the Summit, the African Group is now pleased to witness the successful conclusion of the Commission on Sustainable Development and welcomes the establishment of the High-Level Political Forum. Our Group is confident that the Forum will boost efforts to tackle global economic, social and environmental challenges in an integrated manner.

These, Mr. Chairman, are some of the most critical issues that are of utmost importance to Africa.

The African Group, therefore, is ready to engage in a constructive and meaningful manner on this and other issues, and reiterates its fullest support and cooperation to make the work of the committee a success.

I thank you.