MAURITANIA

STATEMENT
BY
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TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK

ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP

AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE OCCASION OF THE 25th ANNIVERSARY
OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

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Prière de vérifier au Prononcé

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Chairperson,

Excellences,

Distinguished delegates,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the African Group on the occasion of the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Convention of the rights of the Child.

As we are gathered today to celebrate this anniversary, it is an opportunity to give an overview of progress made in the implementation of commitments made on the protection and promotion of the rights of the child. The African Group believes that remarkable progress has been made for children in African countries over the last decade as illustrated by the (i) marked declines in under-five mortality; (ii) improved access to clean water and sanitation, and (iii) increase in primary school enrolment in all regions of the continent. However, profound challenges remain. The continent still has the highest under-five mortality rates in the world with half of the world’s annual 6.6 million deaths being in Africa. Similarly, over half of the world’s out-of-school children live in Africa, 1 in 3 children under-five in Africa is stunted and an estimated 3.1 million children under fifteen years are living with HIV. As Member States continue to shape the Post-2015 Development Agenda, it is critical for Africa’s children to remain a priority and benefit from increased attention and investments.

To address in sustainable manner child protection, the causes and symptoms of child abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children should be addressed. Research shows that there is a strong correlation between poverty and child abuse and exploitation

While we are commemorating and recognizing the important changes that have taken place in the realization of children’s rights, we applaud the progress made, but we feel that a lot remain to be done to scale up progress in many African countries. African states continue to face challenges of poverty, political instability, economic and financial crisis, climate change and inadequate funding which make it difficult to provide infrastructure services necessary to cater for the needs of children particularly children with disabilities. In armed conflicts situations, African children remain vulnerable as refugees or displaced persons, they witness acts of violence, and they suffer from being orphaned and lose their lives as well as education opportunities, a chance to enjoy their livelihood and to be part of a peaceful community.
In this regards, we welcome the campaign of the SRSG for children and armed conflict, launched jointly with the UNICEF in March 2014, "Children are not soldiers", aiming to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children by Government forces by 2016.

The African Group would like to seize this opportunity to commend UNICEF for their work and pledges to remain engaged to help the organization carry out its mandate.

UNICEF has a proven track record of leading the way in the promotion and protection of the rights of the child and Africa believes UNICEF will live up to its reputation in this regard for the upcoming years.

The African Group recognizes that resources are key to achieving excellence in the delivery of results for children. UNICEF will never have enough resources to implement comprehensive equity strategies around the world.

We welcome also the partnership agreement signed between the office of the SRSG and the African Union in September 2013 and invite her to continue her work on the strengthening of the child protection system.

We remain concerned about the continuing using of school and hospitals as military target, including its grave consequences on the deprivation of children from their basic right to education and health.

The African States agrees that violence against children hampers full enjoyment of their rights and their well-being.

The international community should continue to coordinate its efforts, including through the allocation of appropriate funds, to assure child protection, child welfare, access to health and education and to end all the forms of violence against children.

Chairperson,

The well-being of Africa's children depends entirely on the well-being of their families and communities. The African Group therefore believes that interventions directed towards children must also take a family centered approach that gives appropriate attention to their families. Young people undergo a variety of new experiences; they need appropriate guidance that will ultimately contribute meaningfully to their personal development as well as of their societies. The African states are convinced that child's rights, welfare and protection are core of human social development. As such, the African states have committed themselves individually and collectively to take the necessary steps and measures to ensure the protection, survival
and development of the child in conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The African Heads of State and Government adopted an African common position on the rights of the child, in 2001 in Cairo, Egypt. This was further reviewed in 2007. The review gave an opportunity for the African States to take stock of the achievements and challenges. This review identified that much more needed to be done hence the adoption of the “Call for accelerated action on the implementation of the plan action towards Africa Fit for Children (2008-2012)” during the AU Summit in January 2008.

Chairperson,

At the continental level, the issue of child marriage is a common concern that is individually and collectively addressed. African states have launched a Campaign to end child marriage in Africa. The African states request the international support to the AU Goodwill Ambassador to end child marriage, Ms. Nyaradzayi Gumbonsvanda. She is tasked with promoting advocacy and raising awareness on the effects of child marriage. The African Group believes that child marriage perpetuate problems relating to health, lack of education, gender based violence, abuse, exploitation, inadequate access to nutrition services and lack of participation in economic opportunities.

Chairperson,

Allow me, to conclude that, as we are defining the implementation framework of the post 2015 development agenda and the 2063 of the African Union Vision, the African child remains vulnerable due to among others, conflicts, inequalities in income and wealth, unemployment, HIV and AIDS pandemic, EBOLA, situation of poverty and hunger, illiteracy and poor quality education systems, vagaries of economic and financial crisis as well as climate change, restricted access to health services and to information and exposure to various forms of discrimination.

It is therefore important to give due consideration to the protection and well-being of children in the sustainable development framework to ensure that children who are our future are guaranteed the needed peace and security, social investment and appropriate child protection policies crucial to the development of their full capabilities.

I thank you all for your attention.