



**ADDRESS**

**BY**

**H.E. MR. FAWZI SALLOUKH**

**MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND EMIGRANTS  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF LEBANON**

**AT THE  
HIGH LEVEL PLENARY MEETING  
ON  
“AFRICA’S DEVELOPMENT NEEDS:  
STATE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF VARIOUS  
COMMITMENTS, CHALLENGES, AND THE WAY  
FORWARD”**

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Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

I wish at the outset to express Lebanon's appreciation for holding this High-Level meeting. I am confident that under your able leadership we will engage in a constructive debate and reach concrete results.

I also wish to associate myself to the statement made by the distinguished representative of H.E. Mr. Baldwin Spencer, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, on behalf of the G77 and China.

The African continent has been lately the focus of increasing world attention. This has manifested itself through various political and diplomatic initiatives, including by the Security Council and various high-level bodies. In this context, this meeting is more than necessary to take stock of African developments pertinent to the Millennium Development Goals, which unfortunately are unevenly achievable. This meeting gains crucial importance also to verify and make sure that International commitments to Africa are in synergy with local endeavors.

The world has a moral and strategic obligation to address concerns of poverty and disease and despair on the African Continent, which continues to face daunting challenges that are putting the majority of its countries off track to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Those challenges were further exacerbated by the global food crisis, the soaring energy prices, and the adverse effects of climate change and, at times, unresolved conflicts. All this is claiming the lives of people and the fading away of investments. To all this we add a high level of brain drain resulting from the process of migration thus depriving the continent of an essential human capital. Today, 200 hundred million African people are malnourished with 30 million risking starvation.

Promising developments, however, did occur. the birth in 2001 of NEPAD, the transformation of the Organization of African Unity into AU in 2002 and the increasing effectiveness of Africa's Regional Economic Communities (REC's). To all this I add strenuous efforts being made by the African countries themselves towards improved governance across the continent. All this is as further confirmation of Africa's determination, and enhanced capacity to exercise full

ownership of its own development agenda in an effort by developing countries to put the house in order, as former Secretary General Kofi Annan called it. Notwithstanding all this, there remains a tremendous job to be done by African Countries themselves, but also by the international community and, Africa's development partners in particular, which have a crucial role to play in supporting Africa's own efforts to address and overcome challenges. This should consist of a multidimensional strategy which consists of defined goals within binding timeframes to boost economic growth, help in achieving MDGs, consolidation of peace and addressing Climate Change.

Within this strategy, debt remains among the most important factors that hamper all efforts for development. Developed countries should effect major debt relief and restructuring and grant debt relief to non HIPC African Countries.

Mr. President,

Africa's trade represents only 2% of world trade while the continent represents 12% of the world's population. The resumption and conclusion of the Doha trade round should not be delayed, and developed countries are invited to facilitate the creation of an open, non-discriminatory trading system particularly by addressing trade distorting domestic support like agricultural and export subsidies. African Agricultural products should be provided market access to developed Countries, and in this regard we support the Aid for trade initiative as it promotes the productive and trade capacities of African Countries.

Transfer of technology from developed to developing countries represents an essential element in development efforts. Capacity building efforts of African countries should be assisted as they constitute a primordial element in enhancing the production and the human capital.

Today, 2/3 of people infected with HIV / AIDS live in Africa and the treatment is not yet available on a universal basis. We believe that generic drugs should become more accessible and partnerships between local and pharmaceutical companies and multinationals should be encouraged.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, addressing the development needs of Africa is a necessity which should rank high on the world's agenda. This kind of reflection of Africa's development needs should not be an occasional exercise, but rather a lasting commitment which should benefit from a follow up mechanism with definite timeframes, and all this should benefit from an active support by the United Nations and the UN System. International peace and security cannot be dissociated from a global holistic strategy to address underdevelopment and resolve conflicts peacefully according to International law. African countries, like all developing countries, are not just business opportunities on which major powers compete; furthermore, they constitute partners in world civilization which should be treated as such with all due respect to their peoples' aspirations, cultures and rights. This is very true for Africa but also true for all regions and continents.

My country, Lebanon, is proud to have historic close relations with African countries, further consolidated by the presence of Lebanese communities in nearly all countries of the continent. We, Lebanese, are proud to have contributed to the development of African countries while benefiting from the opportunities which lie in this generous continent, inheritor of great civilizations. Thousands of Afro - Lebanese join me today in saluting this initiative and adhering to the final declaration and hoping for its thorough follow-up. We are convinced that Africa has provided a lot to the world, and it is high time of the community of States to stand by Africa in its efforts towards economic prosperity and human development.