



20 August 2008

Excellency,

We write to you in our capacity as co-facilitators for the political declaration to be adopted on 22 September 2008 at the High Level Meeting on "Africa's Development Needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward"

We are pleased to inform you that, having conducted informal consultations with the general membership, the regional groups and relevant institutions, we have prepared the enclosed draft political declaration. In this draft, we have endeavored to reflect views, concerns and viewpoints of the membership as expressed during these consultations.

It remains our intention to hold two additional consultations with the membership in the coming weeks, once delegations have had the opportunity to study the draft. We have scheduled these informal consultations for Thursday, 28 August 2008, from 10am to 1pm, in Conference Room 2 and on Friday, 12 September 2008, from 10am to 1pm, in the Trusteeship Council Chamber. These will constitute opportunities for the general membership to express their views on the content of the draft political declaration of the High-level Meeting. As previously agreed, we do not foresee negotiations on this text.

We would appreciate if you could distribute this draft to the Member States and invite them for the two upcoming consultations, encouraging them to attend at the Ambassadorial level.

We would also be grateful if, through your good offices, this draft could be shared with the incoming President of the General Assembly.

We thank you for the excellent cooperation on this matter,

Yours sincerely,

Ismael Gaspar Martins
Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Angola

Frank Majoor
Permanent Representative
of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

H.E. Mr. Srgjan Kerim
President of the 62nd session of the
United Nations General Assembly

“Furthering Africa’s development through partnership”

*Political declaration of the High Level Meeting on “Africa’s development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward”
22 September 2008*

1. We, heads of State and Government, ministers and representatives gathered at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 22 September 2008 to meet the development needs of the African continent.
2. Africa is a continent of great potential and endowed with valuable human and natural resources. This high-level meeting represents a unique opportunity to strengthen positive developments and to contribute towards the establishment of a global partnership for development in Africa.
 - **We recommit ourselves to a global partnership of equals based on our common values, shared responsibility and the determination to collectively act for our common future and to mobilize the resources, including human, financial, and technological, required to end poverty and underdevelopment in Africa, with the objective of turning existing commitments into actions.**
 - **We commit ourselves to the fulfillment of the dreams and aspirations of the African people to a better world in which all Africans can live in dignity and peace;**

Development and poverty reduction

3. Eradicating poverty, particularly in Africa, is the greatest global challenge facing the world today. African countries have the primary responsibility for their own economic and social development. National leadership and ownership of national development cannot be overemphasized. We welcome and recognize the ongoing implementation of national development plans and strategies as well as the African Peer Review Mechanism.
 - **We reaffirm our commitment to address the special needs of Africa, a continent where, despite recent considerable improvements, the full and timely achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, remains elusive.**
4. African governments have made much progress with respect to democracy, the protection of human rights and sustainable economic policies. Sound economic policies, solid democratic institutions responsive to the needs of the people and improved infrastructure are the basis for sustained economic growth, poverty reduction and employment creation.
5. Urgent action is needed on all sides, including more ambitious national development strategies and efforts backed by an improved enabling environment at all levels and increased international support.
 - **We recommit ourselves to partnering with Africa on the development path it has carved out for itself.**
6. Africa faces a number of serious challenges, including food security, climate change, energy supply, HIV/AIDS and migration. We commend African countries for their leadership in addressing these challenges and charting the way forward for the region in the context of NEPAD and the African Union as well as through national development plans and strategies, including commitments in priority areas of action, like agriculture, infrastructure, good governance, investment, health and education.

Peace and security

7. Peace and development go hand in hand. We note the positive trends and advances in promoting durable peace in Africa, and we welcome and further encourage the efforts of the African Union and the sub-regional organizations in strengthening their peacekeeping capacity and undertaking peacekeeping operations in the continent. We stress the importance of peace consolidation mechanisms and processes, such as the *African Union Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development Framework* and the UN

Peacebuilding Commission. The Peacebuilding Commission, established by the 2005 World Summit, is a testimony of the willingness of world leaders to support post-conflict countries on the road to recovery and sustainable peace.

- **We note the important steps taken by the Peacebuilding Commission in setting up integrated peace building strategies and call for increased regional and international support to the implementation of these strategies.**
8. Sustainable peace and security require appropriate mechanisms of justice and rule of law. Both at the national and international level, such mechanisms can and must ensure that impunity is effectively countered. In this context, it is recalled that human rights and dignity depend on the preservation of the rule of law and the fulfillment of our common obligations under international human rights law and humanitarian law.
 - **We pledge to work individually, together, and with our partners, including in civil society, for the fulfillment of these obligations.**
 - **We are committed to strengthening domestic, regional and international human rights mechanisms and call on all states to support these efforts to the benefits of freedom, justice, dignity and equality across Africa and the world.**
 9. Where peace and stability remain beyond reach,
 - **we call on all parties concerned to end hostilities and to engage in the search for peaceful solutions with the support of international and regional partners including the African Union and the United Nations.**
 10. Africa is home to refugees and internally displaced persons. We recall our obligations under the relevant norms of international human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law.
 - **We pledge to take concrete action to meet the protection and assistance needs of refugees, returnees and displaced persons.**

Financing for development

11. African governments will endeavor to mobilize domestic resources and attract private capital to finance the targeted investments and expenditures needed to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.
 - **We call for the reinvigoration of actions in fulfilling the commitments to assist the continent in meeting its development needs.**
12. Official Development Assistance to Africa has increased, mostly due to debt relief. We are, however, concerned that donors are falling behind their commitment to double aid to Africa.
 - **We call for the fulfillment of all Official Development Assistance commitments, including the commitments by many developed countries to increase their Official Development Assistance to 0.7 percent of Gross National Income by 2015, including the specific target of 0.15% to 0.20% of GNI for Least Developed Countries by 2010.**
 - **We emphasize the special importance of finding durable solutions to the debt sustainability and management problems in African countries.**
13. The High-level Forums on Aid Effectiveness, which produced the 2005 Paris Declaration and this year's Accra Agenda for Action, are critical steps forward in relation to improving aid effectiveness.
 - **We commit to improve the effectiveness of development assistance and stress in this regard the fundamental principles of ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results and mutual accountability.**
14. Africa's development partners have undertaken various important initiatives in recent years, such as, inter alia, the Africa Partnership Forum, the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership, China-Africa Partnership, the European Union-Africa Strategic Partnership, the Group of Eight, the Millennium

Challenge Account, the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief of the President of the United States of America and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), and emphasizes in this regard the importance of coordination in such initiatives on Africa and the need for their effective implementation.

- **We urge the United Nations system, International Financial Institutions, relevant regional institutions, and Africa's other development partners to continue to support African governments in their efforts to address their development needs.**
15. South-South cooperation has great potential and should be promoted. New donors, such as foundations and the private sector, are playing an increasing role.
 16. The private sector is an important contributor to achieving sustained growth and the internationally agreed development goals.
 - **We stress the importance of strengthening domestic financial sectors as a source of capital by making them truly inclusive, thus expanding access to financial services.**
 - **We stress the importance of increasing foreign direct investment into Africa and its diversification away from the extractive industries for greater employment generation, transfer of technology and knowledge, access to international markets and competition.**
 17. Africa's share of international trade should be increased through regional integration and greater integration into the global economy and fulfillment of our commitment to a well-functioning, universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system which promotes sustainable development.
 - **We call for stronger national action and international support to build domestic productive competitive export supply capacities, as well as trade-supportive logistics for African countries.**

Challenges

18. The rising food prices pose serious risks to food security in Africa and to development gains made.
 - **We call for urgent action by African countries, with the support of the international community, in the short, medium and long term, to rapidly increase agricultural production, through policies and actions to increase productivity, strengthening research and enabling the use of modern farming techniques, as set out in the *Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)* of the *New Partnership for Africa's Development*.**
19. Water resources in Africa are underutilized and unevenly shared, and this continues to pose a challenge to food security. Africa is committed to addressing this concern and we welcome Africa's commitment to the *African Water Vision 2025*, the Sirte Declaration on agriculture and water in Africa, and the Sharm El-Sheikh commitments for accelerating the achievement of water and sanitation goals in Africa.
20. Energy is essential for economic activity, for learning and for the provision of health services. However, only one in four Africans has access to electricity.
 - **We are deeply concerned about the negative effects of the sharp rise in energy prices. We recognize the urgent need for large-scale investments in energy infrastructure, as outlined in NEPAD.**
21. Despite emitting the least greenhouse gases, countries in Africa face increased risks from the negative effects of climate change. There is an urgent need to address adaptation needs, including financing needs, relating to such effects with appropriate international cooperation mechanisms and policies, but also mitigation by reducing global emissions with at least 50% by 2050, in particular, by the contributions from all major economies, consistent with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities.
 - **We are committed to the facilitation of transfer of appropriate technology in order to ensure a low carbon intensive economic development in Africa.**

22. Assuring women's rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women is crucial. We recognize the role of microfinance, including microcredit, in the eradication of poverty, the empowerment of women and the generation of employment.
 - **We commit to ensuring inclusive mechanisms for gender equality and women's empowerment.**
23. Limited access to the highest attainable standards of health, including sexual and reproductive health, cause high levels of maternal morbidity and maternal mortality.
 - **We reaffirm the commitment to achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015.**
24. Violence against women and children remains a concern especially in the context of armed conflict.
 - **We resolve ensure the strict adherence to national and international norms regarding violence against women and girls**
25. African governments, supported by the international community, have expanded primary health care systems through providing basic and vital health services, especially to women, and scaling up of community and mid-level health workers, while addressing the need for more highly trained and specialized staff.
26. Africa remains the worst-affected area by HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. We recognize the commitment by African governments and regional institutions to scale up their own HIV/AIDS responses in order to curb the devastating effects of this pandemic.
 - **We reaffirm our resolve to provide assistance for the prevention and care, with the aim of ensuring an HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis-free generation in Africa and of achieving the goal of Universal access by 2010 to HIV/AIDS treatment in African countries and call upon pharmaceutical companies to provide drugs, including antiretroviral drugs that are affordable and accessible in Africa. We also reaffirm our commitment to research on prevention tools, especially on an HIV vaccine.**
27. Universal primary enrollment rates in Africa have increased substantially. However, the goal of primary education for all has not yet been reached. Educational quality and equality has also to be improved.
 - **We renew our resolve to fulfill our commitments towards education, especially in countries experiencing fragility, using the full range of bilateral and multilateral instruments, including a fully-funded *Education For All – Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Fund*.**

Conclusion

28. Meeting Africa's development needs requires coordinated, balanced and integrated actions at all levels; for the full and timely achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and to comprehensively address all challenges to Africa's development.
29. All commitments to Africa should be effectively implemented and given appropriate follow-up, by the international community and by Africa itself. In this regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's comprehensive review of Africa's development needs and the report of the MDG Africa Steering Group.
30. This political declaration is adopted on 22 September 2008 on the occasion of the High Level Meeting on "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments challenges and the way forward". It seeks to reaffirm the commitment of all states to addressing the development needs on the African continent. In adopting this political declaration, member states reaffirm their belief in a prosperous future for Africa in which core human values of dignity and peace are fully enshrined. In this context, member states further confirm their adherence to the spirit of cooperation that defines the United Nations system and that is based on a partnership among equals.