

**AFRICAN GROUP STATEMENT FOR THE 43RD SESSION OF
POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT – 12 April 2010**

Mr. President,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentleman.

It is a honour to address this great congregation. Let me congratulate you and the Bureau for assuming this great responsibility of presiding the 43rd session of Commission on Population and development. Please be assured that the African Group will provide all the support you need.

The African Group align itself to the statement made by G77 and China.

Mr. President,

Allow me to express to you our great appreciation on the initiative which you and the bureau have taken to organize in this 43rd session on the population and the development focusing on the debate on the experience of each country on health, maternal morbidity, the infant mortality and their relationship with development. In addition, we are also delighted that the interactive dialogue on this important issue is timely, coinciding with the review of the MDGs and as such, it will provide a basis for sharing experience and allow each one of us to chart out solutions for advancing the objectives of increasing efforts to ensure success in addressing the challenges of maternal and children health, morbidity and maternal mortality.

Mr. President,

Deaths in children under five have declined steadily worldwide in 2008. For the developing regions as a whole, the under-five mortality rate dropped from 103 in 1990 to 74 in 2007. Still, many countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa have made little or no progress at all. The levels are highest in sub-Saharan Africa, where, in 2007, close to one in seven children died before his or her fifth birthday. Together with high levels of fertility, this has resulted in an increase in the absolute number of under-five deaths from 4.2 million in 1990 to 4.6 million in 2007. Sub-Saharan Africa now accounts for half of all deaths among children under five. Every year, 536,000 women and girls die as a result of complications during pregnancy, childbirth or the six weeks following delivery. Almost all of these deaths (99 per cent) occur in developing countries. Unfortunately, half of all maternal deaths (265,000) occur in sub-Saharan Africa

Mr. President,

The Secretary General report demonstrates that there has been a marked improvement in life expectancy since 1950s to-date. However, Africa is lagging behind in many cases Diseases such as Malaria, Tuberculosis and other infectious diseases reduce the life expectancy and claim lives. The HIV/AIDs pandemic has actually worsened the life expectancy by claiming lives of young and productive members of society in Africa.

I wish to express Africa need continued support to finance and campaign against the epidemic diseases whenever they emerge without delays in order to reduce completely the loss of lives. Such support will complement African governments whose priority is health. It is useful to note that the priority on public health, granting has this sector nearly 35% of the national budget in one year. We also believe that for the international community to support interventions in this area, we need to encourage supply of vaccines of good quality for preventive measures and saving lives; we also need to finance hospital equipment in particular in gynaecology and neo-natology for effective interventions that would reduce maternal and infantile mortality enormously.

Mr. President,

African group is challenging the experts and the international community in general to combine efforts to address these challenges especially in Africa where all indicators are spelling that more interventions is still needed. We also feel that the efforts of interventions in this regards should not be vested to governments alone it should also be part of global partnership where private sector, CSOs and Non Governmental organisations need to collaborate.

To conclude, we believe that a key strategy in addressing these multiple challenges in Africa the strategy is to strengthen health systems to ensure that they can deliver the services communities require, including not only curative care and the treatment of acute conditions but also preventive care, health promotion and the long-term management of chronic conditions complemented by international support. We look forward to fruitful and informative deliberations.

I thank you,