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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE FEDERAL
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF AFRICAN GROUP

By

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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE FOR THE HIGH-LEVEL
SEGMENT AT THE 2008 SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE
ECOSOC**

(New York, 2nd July 2008)

Mr. President,

Permit me, at the outset, on the behalf of the African Group, to commend you for the manner in which you have presided over this High-Level Segment of the Council and to associate our group with the statement made on behalf of the Group 77 and China.

We would also like to welcome the first meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum - DCF and the second meeting of the Annual Ministerial Review- AMR. We believe that the concurrence of these meetings enable us to comprehensively discuss various development challenges and address them effectively.

Mr. President,

This year the High-Level Segment of the Council is held at a time when our global economy is confronted with challenges of climate change, high food and energy prices and financial instability with broader consequences affecting efforts to meet the MDGs and internationally agreed development goals. This global economic turmoil, among other things, has greatly exacerbated, especially the suffering of those poor and vulnerable groups in developing countries. This current global situation, according to the Secretary-General report, will make our efforts to achieve sustainable development even more challenging. This is a reality in Africa - the poorest continent of our world.

Despite progress in some areas, the continent still faces multifaceted development challenges. Extreme and widespread of poverty still remains high and poses serious challenges to our development activities. Many Africans are trapped in dire poverty, heavily dependent on a fragile and meager natural resource base and vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks.

Efforts to address these development challenges have not yet yielded the expected results. It has become apparently clear now that sub Saharan African countries may not achieve the MDGs by 2015. The lack of

commitment by development partners to scale-up aid has made it difficult for the continent to remain on track to achieve sustainable development. Apparently, the quality of aid, its predictability and effectiveness still do not receive the appropriate attention they deserve by our development partners.

In the international trade arena, African economies continue to suffer from unfair trade laws and practices, which led them to be marginalized at global level. Progress in the Doha Round of trade negotiations has been extremely slow and appears to be very far from conclusion in the near future.

Mr. President,

As the current economic turmoil has reined across the globe and heightened the continent's calamities, the Group believes the need to put in place a mechanism to address Africa's development challenges in an effective and sustainable manner. The Group also believes that within the context of this mechanism it is appropriate that an integrated approach to rural development be pursued, which could demonstrate the links among environmental sustainability, agricultural productivity and rural poverty. Efforts should also be made to put in place institutional and strategic frameworks that adequately respond to the requirements of sustainable development. The need for programmes with a sharper livelihood focus on local people that meaningfully engage them in addressing challenges at local level should be underscored as it is vital in bringing agricultural transformation and improved livelihoods.

The Group would also like to call upon the international community, especially development partners, to keep their promises in making development aid available in a timely manner. In this regard, the Group hopes that the Accra High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness addresses these issues comprehensively with the view to overcoming problems associated with aid implementation and effectiveness.

We also call upon the international community to work together with national governments to promote debt sustainability through comprehensive debt relief and management programmes.

There has been a call by all developing countries for an effective monitoring and implementation of the MDGs and other internationally development goals. Notably there are some indicators to measure progress made in the first seven MDGs. However, specific benchmarks and targets are not so far available to measure the achievements of Goal 8 i.e. develop a global partnership for development. Preparing a comprehensive matrix by the United Nations to follow up the implementation of this goal is very crucial.

In concluding Mr. President we believe that ECOSOC should continue to be strengthened to foster and promote dialogue to address development needs and most pressing issues of our globe. Strengthening the Council's subsidiary bodies and the task of coordinating the work of the funds and programmes of the United Nations system should strongly be pursued. In this regard, the Group hopes that the Ministerial Declaration will be adopted with emphasis on the issues and concerns of developing countries and that the response of ECOSOC properly streamlined to speed up the implementation of the MDGs and other international agreed development goals.

We also hope that the outcome of this High-level Segment would provide valuable inputs to the forthcoming high-level development forums - the High-Level Session on Africa's Special Development Needs on 22 September 2008 and the High-Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals on 25 September 2008.

I thank you.