

AFRICAN GROUP STATEMENT TO BE DELIVERED AT THE 37TH SESSION OF THE IDB BY H.E. AMBASSADOR GRACE TSITSI MUTANDIRO, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ZIMBABWE, THE CHAIR OF THE AFRICAN GROUP : 10-12 MAY 2010

Mr. President,

1. On behalf of the African Group, I have the honour to extend to you, Ambassador Bock, our sincere congratulations on your election as President of the 37th session of the Industrial Development Board. The Group is confident that under your able stewardship, the deliberations of this session will be fruitful. The Group also congratulates members of the Bureau on their election. We assure you of our full cooperation and support. I also wish to express our appreciation to the President of the 36th Session H.E. Dr. Jerry Ugokwe, the former Permanent Representative of Nigeria and members of his bureau for the commendable manner in which they conducted the work of the last IDB session.
2. Once again, the African Group expresses its congratulations to the Director-General upon his re-election for a second term. The group commends his continued efforts and commitment towards enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of UNIDO. We thank the Director General for his opening remarks and also thank the Secretariat for preparing the documents for this session.
3. With regard to the Agenda before us, the Group associates itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Algeria, H.E. Ambassador Taous Ferroukhi on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
4. The Group will be making comments on Agenda items 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 12 in the course of the deliberations.

Thank you

Item3: Annual report of the Director- General for 2009 on the activities of the Organization

Mr. President,

1. The African Group takes note of the Annual Report of the Director-General for 2009 as contained in document IDB.37/2 which highlights UNIDO's efforts towards the realization of inclusive, equitable and sustainable industrial development.
2. The Group appreciated the convening of the high-level industrial development forum during the 13th Session of the General Conference. It provided a platform for indepth and focused discussion on the challenges and opportunities arising from the global economic crisis as well as prospects for economic recovery. Similarly, the regional round table discussion on Africa that focused on sustainable biofuels industries provided a platform to discuss the optimal ways and possibilities of African countries embarking on sustainable biofuels production.
3. The Group appreciates the high project approval rate by the Programme Approval Committee (PAC) in the technical cooperation activities. We note the important role PAC plays in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of these activities.
4. Regarding the ongoing restructuring exercise, in particular, the alignment with the Global Environment facility (GEF) fiduciary standards and the implementation of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) as well as the continued application of results-based management (RBM) system, the Group encourages UNIDO to remain mindful of the critical need for gender balance and upholding the principle of equitable geographic representation in the appointment of its staff. These considerations should also be taken into account in the implementation of the Young Professionals Programme which was initiated in 2009.
5. The Group commends UNIDO for the progress registered to date with respect to the implementation of programmes under the thematic area of poverty reduction through productive activities within the context of

the Medium-Term-Programme for 2008-2011. We commend the measures UNIDO is taking in a number of African Countries to impart entrepreneurial skills to the youth through the Entrepreneurship Curriculum Programme (ECP). Apart from widening employment opportunities for school leavers, the programme also lays the base for meaningful SME development. We are also encouraged by the plans by UNIDO to further cascade the programme to more African Member States.

Likewise, the Group notes with appreciation, the initiatives UNIDO is taking to promote the economic empowerment of women as well as improve rural communities' access to affordable energy.

In the agro-industries sector, the Group is encouraged to note that with the majority of food processing projects, focus is shifting towards value chain development and a market-oriented approach. The shift is a critical step towards improving productivity and competitiveness as well as business linkages.

We commend UNIDO's initiative on projects to redesign and equip workshops and factories for the design and manufacturing of agricultural machinery and tools. The group would appreciate the wider dissemination of information on such technology.

6. Within the thematic area of environment and energy, the Group welcomes UNIDO's partnership with other relevant UN Agencies such as UN-Energy, to assist member states in the development of green industries. The Group also notes with keen interest the attention the Organization is giving to the areas of greening industry, renewable energy and the low-carbon economy. Given the huge energy deficit in Africa, we take a keen interest in global initiatives that seek to boost the availability of energy. Meaningful industrial development is predicated on the availability of sufficient and affordable energy. In this regard, the Group commends UNIDO for providing technical support for the establishment of clean energy based industrial industries in Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria and Rwanda among others. Further, the Group welcomes the progress on GEF financed projects in a number of African countries. The Group welcomes the anticipated establishment of the regional Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency of the ECOWAS region in Cape Verde.

7. In the thematic area of trade capacity-building, the Group commends UNIDO's programmes focusing on value addition, achieving sector-based industrial upgrading, and ensuring compliance with international standards. It takes note of UNIDO's efforts to improve export performance in some African countries, notably Zambia and Cote d'Ivoire, through the strengthening of regulations for quality and standardization. It further welcomes the endorsement by the 13th Session UNIDO General Conference, of the Ministerial Plan of Action for Least Developed Countries adopted at the Least Developed Countries Ministerial Conference held in December 2009 recognizing, among others, that effective development depended on capacity-building, adherence to international quality standards, transfer of technology and improved competitiveness.
8. The Group would like to reaffirm the significance of South-South cooperation in technology and knowledge transfer and its support for UNIDO's initiatives to promote South-South Cooperation. The Group is thus encouraged by the growing trend of more technical cooperation inputs and resources emanating from the countries of the South particularly in the areas of agro industries, renewable energy and trade capacity building. In this regard, the Group appreciates the establishment of UNIDO's new Traceability Center for Agro-Industrial Exports in Egypt that enhances food safety and exports on a regional level.
9. Likewise, the Group is also appreciative of UNIDO's efforts to establish the Investment and Technology Offices to promote investment in Africa. It welcomes and supports the Regional Programme on Investment Promotion currently being conducted in more than 20 African countries.
10. With regard to UNIDO's contributions towards the advancing of the System Wide Coherence and the Delivery as One initiative, the Group supports the organization's continued collaboration with other UN agencies. The Group is encouraged by the progress registered to date in the implementation of the project in Rwanda and looks forward to detailed information on this in the future.

Thank you

Item 4: Cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme and UNIDO's field representation.

Mr President,

1. The African Group takes note of document IDB.37/6 on the final report on UNIDO's cooperation with the United Nations Development Program.
2. The Group believes that enhanced visibility in the field is critical to a more effective programmatic delivery. The group also encourages the organization to continue undertaking measures towards decentralization. Whilst noting that the establishment of UNIDO desks is a cost-effective mechanism to achieve this objective and the measures taken to strengthen and optimize the operations of existing desks, the Group welcomes the Secretariat's plans to conduct an in-depth impact analysis of the field network.
3. The Group welcomes the decision to open a country office in the Democratic Republic of Congo in the near future. Following a prolonged period of economic and political challenges, the magnitude of post-crisis rehabilitation initiatives warrants the establishment of the country office. We also appreciate that consideration is being given to the possibility of that office eventually covering the immediate sub-region.

Thank you

Item 5: Millennium Development Goals : UNIDO's contributions.

Mr. President,

1. The African Group takes note of the document IDB.37/4 reflecting the Millennium Development Goals: UNIDO's contributions in accordance with resolution GC.13/ Res.6. The Group would like to underscore that, the MDGs adopted in 2000 under the United Nations Millennium Declaration are a commitment by world leaders on global cooperation

to fight poverty, hunger, disease, malnutrition and environmental degradation.

2. The Group takes note that many developing countries have demonstrated their ability to make remarkable strides in economic growth through the development of their productive capacity and harness this to lift people out of poverty.
3. The Group welcomes and stresses UNIDO's overarching development objective as contained in the medium-term programme framework 2010-2013, which provides the overall context in which the Organization aims to deliver on the mandate given by its Member States and contribute to the achievement of the MDGs.
4. In this context, the Group believes that UNIDO should reinforce its contributions to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, promote youth employment, gender equality and women empowerment, develop a global partnership for development, and combat HIV/AIDS and malaria. In this regard, UNIDO is encouraged to focus on developing industries and Agro-value chain development through productive capacities by promoting small and medium-sized enterprises.
5. The group would like to underline that we are now five years away from the deadline of realizing the commitments embodied in the MDGs and the prospect of missing a number of the targets is becoming a stark reality.
6. Finally, the African Group recognizes that developing countries need to play a key role in their own developmental process by supporting industrialization, higher value-added agricultural sector and services, and improvement in technological and human capabilities in order to attain sustainable development.

Thank you

Item 6: Financial situation of UNIDO

Mr President,

1. The African Group takes note of document IDB.37/7 on the financial situation of UNIDO and expresses its satisfaction with UNIDO's improved position as compared to previous years, due to the high collection rate of assessed contributions.
2. The Group appreciates and recognizes the considerable efforts made by all those Member States that have honored their commitments and obligations as stipulated in their respective payment plans. The Group appeals to other Member States and former Member States to consider submitting payments plans to steadily reduce their outstanding assessed contributions. The Group requests the Director General to continue his efforts to collect the outstanding amounts.
3. With regard to unutilized balances of appropriations, the Group notes that 6 545 524 Euros became available for financing the change management initiative and for special accounts for technical cooperation. The Group wishes to express appreciation to those Members States that renounced their shares and calls upon Member States and donors to make voluntary contributions for technical cooperation special account in order to enhance the role of the organization to face the challenges of industrial development in Africa.

Thank you

Item 7: Financial Regulations of UNIDO

1. The African Group refers to the decision adopted by the General Conference GC.13/Dec. 12. Considering the complexity and importance of the matter, the African Group is of the view that further discussions be held.

Item 8: Activities of the Evaluation Group

Mr President,

1. The African Group takes note of Document IDB.37/5 on the Activities of the Evaluation Group during the year 2009. The evaluation activities provide an insight into the performance of UNIDO in all its

areas of operation. The Group supports the evaluation function for accountability, organizational learning and contribution towards change and improvement. The Group believes that the result of the analysis would provide room for further improvement.

Thank you

Item 9: Activities of the Joint Inspection Unit

Mr President,

1. The African Group takes note of the document IDB.37/3 on the Activities of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU). The Group considers some of the JIU reports contained in the document to be of great importance to UNIDO.
2. The Group notes with satisfaction that UNIDO remained one of the "best practice" organizations recognized by the JIU with regard to the status of reports considered by its governing bodies.
3. The Group concurs with the recommendations contained in the JIU's report JIU/REP/2009/5 entitled "Towards more coherent United Nations system support in Africa", and encourages UNIDO to contribute, in the area of its thematic priorities, to enhance coherence and effectiveness at the country level, for the elaboration and the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.
4. In the JIU's report entitled "Internships in the United Nations system", the Group encourages UNIDO to implement the recommendations made by the JIU. In this regards, the Group agrees with the recommendations which aim at increasing geographical distribution of interns.

Thank you

Item 10: Multilingualism

Mr President,

1. The African Group refers to the General Conference resolution GC.13L.2/RES.4 and IDB 37/9 on multilingualism and welcomes the efforts made by the organization in the follow up of the mentioned resolution. In this regard, the Group reiterates the necessity of balanced use of six official languages in the work of the secretariat.
2. The Group stresses the importance, for industrial development, of ensuring that all African States enjoy the greatest possible access to the organization's information and documentation.
3. Thus, we call upon the organization to continue to promote linguistic diversity in the work of UNIDO, to respect the equality of official languages of the United Nations Organization for the work of the Secretariat.
4. The Group believes that with regard to recruitment, the knowledge of more than one official UN language should apply for candidates for the vacancies related to management posts in the Organization.
5. The African Group Requests the Director-General:
 - (i) to designate a coordinator for multilingualism within existing posts in the Organization,
 - (ii) to take all measures necessary to translate, within existing resources, internal documents, such as circulars, manuals, forms and Director-General's Bulletins, into official UN languages.

Thank you

Item12: Matters related to intergovernmental, non-governmental, governmental and other organizations.

Mr President,

1. The African Group takes note of documents IDB 37/11 and IDB 37/12

on matters relating to intergovernmental, non-governmental, governmental and other organizations.

2. The Group takes note of the low response level from these organizations and hopes that the outcomes of the second review of the status of cooperation with international non-governmental organizations will bear more fruitful outcomes.
3. The Group welcomes the application for observer status by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) as UNIDO is viewed to be a key partner to ICGLR in developing cross-cutting programmes in aspects relating to: Youth employment and development of skills for productive work, poverty reduction, food security, environment and the establishment of a Regional Support Mechanism for Micro-Finance Institutions.
4. The African Group would like to support the conclusion of an appropriate relationship agreement with ICGLR by UNIDO in accordance with the General Conference decision GC.1/Dec. 41.

Thank you