

SOUTH AFRICAN STATEMENT ON AFRICA – 26b FEBRUARY 2009

Chairperson, the South African delegation fully endorses the statement made by Sudan on behalf of the G77 and China and with Senegal on behalf of the Africa group. We appreciate the valuable inputs from the panellists this afternoon.

Poverty in Africa remains the single biggest challenge to sustainable development. Challenges such as HIV / Aids and other diseases, education, access to land, lack of investment, access to credit facilities, as well as the effects of the current global financial, food and energy crisis, also impact negatively on the development strategies of the continent.

Chair, to overcome the aforementioned challenges, integrated planning, good governance and commitment and collaborative efforts are required from African Governments as well as significant and timely support from the international community. **NEPAD** is the primary implementing vehicle for the engagement of the international community in support of Africa's development.

The African Ministers responsible for land, agriculture, water and economic development have committed to the implementation of improving **agricultural productivity** in Africa and the full and urgent implementation of the **Comprehensive Agricultural Development Programme**, which also addresses access to land, agricultural inputs and the implementation of land tenure systems, landuse and sustainable use of natural resources. Many parts of Africa are affected by drought and desertification. Support for integrated planning, linked to water availability, as well as **alignment of land reform and water allocation reform initiatives**, should therefore be prioritized.

A key to **unlocking growth potential** in Africa lies in supporting and enabling African communities to pursue economic development, including rural agro-industries in sectors where the comparative advantages exist. To this end we call for the **successful and urgent conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda**.

Investment in **infrastructure** in Africa is critical for stimulating economic growth. This must include road infrastructure, water, sanitation, housing, affordable transport, energy, and communication systems.

Access to appropriate technologies, linked to training, **skills transfer** and technical support remains a priority for Africa. In this context we call for the urgent implementation of the **Bali Strategic Plan** for Technology Support and Capacity Building. We are calling for national dedication to the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI).

We further emphasize the importance of **increased investment** in research and development, through scientific and technical co-operation at all levels, while also recognizing and promoting indigenous knowledge systems.

Chairperson, **Women and youth in Africa** are the most vulnerable. There is an urgent need for alternative livelihood opportunities aimed at revitalizing **rural economies** and **mainstreaming youth and women participation** in rural economic sectors. Efforts are needed to strengthen programmes that **promote agricultural and non-agricultural career options**- especially amongst the youth and to assist both women and the youth in the development of entrepreneurial skills.

Finally Chairperson, Africa continues to be subjected to trade imbalances, as well as the effect of current financial, food and energy crisis, climate change and environmental degradation. We therefore call upon **developed nations and the international community** at large to **honour and expand on their financial commitments** towards sustainable development in Africa

