



Statement

On Behalf of the
Arab Group

By

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To the United Nations

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Check against Delivery

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Madame Chair,

At the outset, the Arab group would like to congratulate you and your Bureau on your election to steer the work of the 2nd Committee during the 63rd Session of the General Assembly. We are quite confident, Madame Chairperson, that under your wise and able leadership the 2nd committee will make some substantive achievements, and would like to assure you of the Arab Group's full support and cooperation.

We would also like to thank the outgoing Bureau, in particular H. E. Ambassador Kirsti Lintonen, for their diligent work and very able stewardship of this committee during the 62nd Session of the General Assembly.

We would like to express our appreciation to Mrs Asha-Rose Migiro, Deputy Secretary General, for her Statement. We additionally would like to express our appreciation to Mr. Sha Zukang, Under Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, for his insightful and comprehensive statement and for his continued efforts intended to strengthen the United Nations role in the economic and social fields.

The Arab Group would furthermore like to associate itself to the statement made by the distinguished representative of Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group of 77 and China

Madame Chair,

The promising previous years of robust economic growth are now fading away due to the daunting and serious challenges that the world economy is facing. Those challenges are putting at risk all the achievements that have been made and all the efforts that have been exerted by developing countries toward securing a sustainable economic growth conducive to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In short, they are shoving the world economy into times of uncertainty thus allowing the shadow of recession to loom in the horizon. In fact, the international food crisis, the international energy crisis, the international financial and credit crisis and the international climate change are so large in magnitude that they require concerted and cooperative efforts among all Member States in order to address their adverse impact. They also require a global response through the design and implementation of action oriented policies to address

those challenges that threaten progress towards the achievement of the Internationally Agreed Development Goals including the Millennium Development Goals.

Madame Chair,

The recent contagious financial turmoil which put the world economy on the verge of an overall economic collapse, revealed the urgent need to address the lack of adequate supervision and regulation of domestic financial markets. Policy makers in developed and developing countries alike are requested to work together in order to avoid a global recession, since maintaining strong economic growth in developing countries is essential to supporting their endeavors and generating the necessary resources to achieve the millennium development goals.

Madame Chair,

The Arab Group is deeply concerned by the decline in Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2007 for the second consecutive year. We consider that debt relief and cancellation in addition to humanitarian assistance should not be part of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) since otherwise it becomes contradictory to the commitments made by donor countries as part of the Monterrey Consensus, which provided that debt relief should be additional to conventional forms of ODA. We call upon the developed countries to fulfill their commitments through the achievement of the targets of 0.7 per cent of their Gross National Income (GNI) as Official Development Assistance (ODA) to developing countries, and of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their GNI to Least Developed Countries. The Arab Group stresses the need to provide ODA as a direct budgetary support and without any conditionality.

The Arab Group calls upon the developed countries to implement the commitments made in the outcome of the major United Nations conferences and Summits in the economic Social and related fields. This implementation could be further promoted through the commitment of the developed countries to the Global Partnership for Development.

The Arab Group is quite concerned about the fact that some developing countries, especially the African ones, are still off track and will not be able to achieve the Millennium development Goals in 2015. We welcome the

holding of the High-Level Meetings on Africa Development Needs and on the Millennium Development Goals. In this respect, we support the proposal made by the Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki Moon to hold a Millennium Development Goals review Summit in 2010 and we call for the launching of the consultation process to develop a resolution on the objectives and modalities of that meeting. We also support the creation of a follow up and monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the Millennium development Goals.

We call upon the international community to pay special attention to the least developed countries of the Arab world which have a high percentage of their population living below the poverty line.

The Arab Group recognizes the special needs of Africa, the only continent currently not on track to achieve the Internationally Agreed Development Goals including the Millennium Development Goals, and called for the full and timely implementation of all commitments made so as to enable African countries to enter the mainstream of the world economy.

We also call for taking into consideration the needs for the Middle income Developing Countries which include more than half of the poor of the world, and call for developing an integrated action programme within the current session to accommodate their needs.

Madame Chair,

The Arab Group would like to reiterate that Climate change should be addressed within the context of sustainable development and equal weight should be given to the three pillars of sustainable development: economic development, social development, and environmental protection, which should be addressed in an integrated, coordinated and balanced manner.

We also stress that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto protocol are the central international fora to address climate change issues. We further consider that the achievement of the intended objectives from the convention and the protocol should occur through the participation of all countries in an effective and appropriate international response that takes into consideration the fulfillment of the developed countries commitments and that observes the principle of

common but differentiated responsibilities and the respective capabilities of all countries and their social and economic conditions.

We look forward to the process that was launched in Bali during the COP13 of the United Nations framework Convention on Climate Change. We are concerned that this process which started with the Bali Road Map and Plan of Action is not progressing in an appropriate way thus shedding doubts about the possibility of reaching a satisfactory outcome in Copenhagen in December 2009. We consider that the outcome should strengthen the commitment of the developed countries to fulfill their obligations especially those related to mitigation, as it should provide new, additional, adequate and predictable financial resources in order to help developing countries adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change. It should also address the transfer of technology from developed to developing countries on concessional and preferential terms including for capacity building. Finally, the outcome should adhere to the Rio Principles, in particular, principle 7 of common but differentiated responsibilities.

We underline the importance of considering the needs for the most vulnerable developing countries by climate change, as stated in the nine criteria of the UNFCCC, and call the developed countries to focus on providing financial resources needed for developing countries in supporting to their efforts to address the negative impacts of climate change through measures for mitigation, adaptation, transfer of technology and capacity building.

The Arab Group would like to refer to the Arab Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change, adopted at the nineteenth session (5-6 December, 2007) of the Council of Arab Ministers of Environment, which underscores their commitment to the adoption of national and regional action plans to address climate change issues. Such Action plans will allow the evaluation of the adverse impacts of climate change, the development of programs for mitigation and adaptation, and the adoption of policies that address climate change issues in all sectors within the framework of national and regional policies for sustainable development.

The Arab Group calls for concerted efforts among the United Nations' Member States in order to address the issues of desertification and drought especially that most of the Arab countries suffer from their adverse impacts. We further stress on the importance of the implementation of the United

Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and call for the provision of the necessary financial resources for this purpose.

Madame Chair,

The Arab group is deeply concerned about the failure of the multilateral trading negotiations in the Doha round for development. We still believe that the Doha development Round represents an opportunity to redress the imbalances in the multi lateral trading system by providing an enhanced and real market access and entry for developing countries' exports of manufactured goods, commodities and services. We are quite concerned by the appearance of new forms of protectionism like non-tariff barriers, and we consider that the lack of progress in the world Trade Organization Doha round of trade negotiations is affecting in one way or another the growth of international trade and is decreasing its capacity of becoming a leading engine for development. We call upon developed countries to demonstrate the political will necessary to overcome the current impasse in the negotiations. We furthermore call upon them to facilitate the accession of developing States to the WTO and to refrain from using political impediments to hinder accession.

We express our appreciation to the state of Qatar for offering to host the Follow-up international conference on Financing for development to Review the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, scheduled to take place in Doha from 29 November to 2 December 2008. We consider that this conference should address the new and emerging issues which could adversely impact development, as it should strengthen the follow up mechanism for the implementation of the commitments made. We further consider that there is a need to find new, additional and innovative sources of financing for development.

We are deeply concerned about the recent food crisis that has multiple causes and is leading to multidimensional consequences that adversely affect the efforts toward the achievement of the Internationally Agreed Development Goals including the Millennium Development Goals. We take note of the initiative of the Secretary-General to establish a High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis, and stress the importance of intensifying the efforts of the Task Force in coordination with the General Assembly, the ECOSOC and relevant international organizations.

The Group further considers that the solution to the international food crisis requires a multifaceted approach with short, medium and long term actions, including immediate support to the affected countries, and the provision of seeds and fertilizers to the small farmers, and we call upon the international community, in particular developed countries, to direct investments to the agricultural sector in developing countries to support their efforts in addressing the impacts of this crisis, and to develop national, regional and international strategies to avoid the recurrence of this crisis. In this regard, the Arab group believes in the importance of establishing a concrete dialogue between importers and exporters of energy and food in the developed and developing countries to discuss all aspects of this issue.

We call upon the developed countries to effect additional major debt cancellation, relief, and restructuring to the heavily indebted poor countries, as the debt burden is crippling the efforts of those countries toward the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Arab group stresses on the necessity to reform the Bretton Woods Institutions in order to increase the voice and participation of the developing countries in the process of decision making and norm setting. We were encouraged by the 2006 annual meetings of the IMF Board of Governors in Singapore which approved an agenda and time frame for quota and voice reform. Unfortunately, those reform proposals have not yet materialized and they are still under discussion among member states.

The Arab Group supports the strengthening of South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation. We consider that South-South Cooperation should not be a substitute to North-South Cooperation by rather a complementary one. We also consider that financial assistance provided through South-South cooperation should not be considered as part of the Official development assistance as those mere manifestations of the spirit of partnership, solidarity and mutual support that governs South-South cooperation. We welcome the conceptual framework and set of principles for South-South Cooperation contained in the "Yamoussoukro Consensus," and we thank the government of Cote D'Ivoire for organizing and holding the twelfth Session of the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries (IFCC-XII), held from 10 to 13 June 2008. We welcome the launch of the South Fund for Development and Humanitarian Assistance during the Yamoussoukro Conference.

We strongly support the strengthening of the South-South Cooperation Unit as a separate entity within the United Nations system, and welcome the convening of the United Nations High level Conference on South-South Cooperation scheduled to take place in 2009.

We would like to express our appreciation to the Sultanate of Oman for offering to host the Ministerial Forum of the Group of 77 and China on Water that is due to be held in Muscat, from 23 to 25 February 2009.

Madame Chair,

The international community must afford the dire economic and social situation and humanitarian conditions of peoples under the yoke of foreign occupation due attention. The international community must also work to remove the negative impact of foreign occupation for economies that have long suffered its consequences in order to facilitate achieving sustainable development and sovereignty over natural resources. In this regard, Member States should pay due attention to the deteriorating situation of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem and the Syrians in the occupied Syrian Golan, who have suffered the yoke of Israeli military occupation for over four decades. Member states should work to confront and put an end to the illegal policies and practices imposed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people, including lifting the suffocating closure of Palestinian territory, ending confiscation of land, demolition of homes, uprooting millions of fruit bearing trees, and razing of agricultural land to make way for the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements and construction of the wall in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as well as UN resolutions and the ICJ advisory opinion on the wall of July 9, 2004. Allowing Israel, the occupying Power, to continue its violations will render all undergoing efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in the occupied Palestinian territories futile and thus deepen the suffering of the Palestinian people. Israel, the occupying Power, must comply with its legal obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law and cease its flagrant violations of the rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to development and a dignified life.

Thank you Madame Chair.