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“Africa”

(Ladies and Gentlemen, Excellencies, /Distinguished Guests/, dear Friends and Colleagues,)

In recent years, Africa has emerged on the international scene, not only as a development issue, but as a political and economic actor in its own right. The creation of the African Union (AU) and the launching of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the work undertaken in the context of the Africa Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), significant economic growth, peace processes and democratic consolidation in many countries all contribute to a more optimistic view of Africa's future. However, enormous challenges remain in coping with health, security, environmental, political and economic issues. Sustainable development must, therefore, remain a key objective for Africa and the international community.

In the context of the MDGs, Africa needs our special attention and support. In the coming years, the overarching political framework for EU-Africa relations will be the new Joint Africa-EU Strategy adopted at the second EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon in December 2007. Through sectoral EU-Africa partnerships, the EU and Africa will work together on peace and security, governance and human rights, trade and regional integration, the MDGs, energy, climate change and other development issues.

In the context of this CSD cycle, the EU considers that the following issues are key to achieving sustainable development.

ODA - Aid Effectiveness - Policy Coherence - Global Partnerships

- The EU collectively provides over half of the world's official development assistance (ODA). It has furthermore committed itself to improving ODA both in quantitative and qualitative terms and to allocating, by 2010, at least 50% of all its new ODA to Africa, which will amount to at least an additional EUR 10 billion every year.
- To achieve sustainable development and attain the MDGs, the effectiveness of aid delivery needs to be improved. All parties need to assume their responsibilities in implementing the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, taking into account improved ownership, governance, financial management and accountability, involvement of parliaments, local communities and civil society, including women's empowerment.

- The EU is committed to promote improved donor coordination and complementarity. To do so, it will work towards joint multi-annual programming based on partner countries' poverty reduction strategies and the countries' own budget processes. Other tools include common implementation mechanisms, shared analyses, joint donor wide missions, and co-financing arrangements.

Agriculture

- Agricultural development is crucial for many African countries, due to its impact on food security and employment. The last decade has seen a decrease in investments in agriculture, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa. The rise in national budgets allocated to rural and agricultural development in some African states (Maputo Declaration) is thus a step in the right direction and is welcomed by the EU. The EU also aligns itself with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).
- Furthermore, the EU pursues support strategies for food security, for example through the “Food Security Thematic Programme” (FSTP). Support packages are under preparation on agricultural research, food security information, policy development and strengthening farmer organisations.

Climate Change – Desertification

- Climate change and environmental degradation will disproportionately affect the poor the most, particularly so in Africa. To address climate change in practical terms, the EU uses several coherent approaches. It is mainstreaming climate change and environmental issues in to EU development cooperation. In addition, it has launched the “Global Climate Change Alliance” (GCCA), focusing on LDCs. It provides an additional coordinated platform, in particular in view of a post-2012 climate agreement. The alliance is in the process of finding appropriate financing.
- The EU-Africa partnership on climate change provides for dialogue, cooperation and concrete climate change actions. It is closely linked to the GCCA. It will also involve cooperation to address land degradation, increasing aridity and natural disaster preparedness.
- EU efforts supplement UN activities to combat climate change, desertification and drought. The EU believes that the 8th COP of the UNCCD reinforced the role of the Convention. Implementing the UNCCD in affected countries will contribute to the attainment of the MDGs, namely by reducing land degradation, water scarcity and loss of biodiversity.

Peace and Development

- The AU and regional organisations are key players in improving peace, security and stability in Africa. During the recent crises, the AU has demonstrated leadership in restructuring its own peace and security architecture. The EU supports the AU also by financing the AU-led peacekeeping missions through the African Peace Facility. Using this instrument, the EU aims to strengthen the AU and regional organisations in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts.
- In order to further improve cooperation, the EU and Africa have launched a strategic partnership, covering conflict prevention, crisis management and stabilisation

efforts in Africa and worldwide. The partnership also aims to ensure predictable funding for Africa-led peace support operations.

- The EU highlights the need for comprehensive approaches to the challenges confronting Africa, such as security implications of natural disasters, access to sustainable energy and water, gender equality, protection of civilians and democratic governance.

Trade/Markets

- Trade is crucial for sustainable economic development. Africa suffers from limited internal markets, inflated exchange rates, infrastructural bottlenecks, low productivity and barriers to regional trade. Improved economic governance and a better investment climate are essential to build Africa's economic strength and allow it to find its place in the global markets.
- Regional integration is very important for Africa's global competitiveness and for moving away from commodity dependence. The EU is committed to integrate poor countries better into the global economy through trade and economic cooperation. The EU has strongly supported putting development at the heart of the multilateral trading system.
- The EU has already approved its Aid for Trade Strategy which will increase its collective expenditure on trade-related assistance to EUR 2 billion per year from 2010. The EU has also opened up its market to all imports from least developed countries through the "Everything but Arms" initiative. Regional integration is thus crucial for the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) which the EU hopes to conclude in full form with African regions during 2008. EPAs are instruments of sustainable development.

The EU believes that the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and its First Action Plan (2008–2010) will foster development and the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals including the MDGs on the African continent.

Our joint commitments and responsibilities are our determination to successfully address all present and future development challenges.