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STATEMENT BY

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DELIVERED AT THE 12TH AFRICAN PARTNERSHIP FORUM (APF) MEETING

ROME, ITALY: 10 JUNE, 2009

Co-Chairs of the Africa Partnership Forum (APF)

Excellencies

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

The convening of the 12th Africa Partnership Forum (APF) in this historical city of Rome in Italy is timely and significant. It is timely and significant given the urgency and importance of the issues on the agenda for the meeting. The issues on the agenda, namely, the response to the impact of the global financial and economic crisis on Africa; climate change; peace and security, with particular focus on drug trafficking, piracy, illegal fishing and money laundering; and reform and effectiveness of the APF are indeed very important to us all.

The impact of the global financial crisis on African economies is well known and need not be overemphasized. What we need are policy responses. In this regard, African countries have made commitments to deepen economic reforms, strengthen regulation and supervision of financial institutions, and harmonize fiscal and monetary policies. In addition, they have made commitments to improve governance and accountability, diversify their economies, improve public expenditure and debt management, and accelerate regional integration.

But many of them lack the ability and flexibility to conduct counter-cyclical policies. Therefore, development partners have a critical role to play. More specifically, they need to meet their commitments, including those made in Monterrey, Gleneagles, and during the G20 Summit held London. Regional and multilateral development banks, on their part, need to increase their financial support to African countries to enable them to finance social safety nets programs and ensure that the financial crisis does not become a humanitarian disaster. In this respect, re-capitalizing them and ensuring that the new resources are disbursed quickly and with flexibility is vital.

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Africa welcomes the inclusion of Climate Change on the agenda for this 12th APF given that it continues to remain the most vulnerable continent to climate variability and change due to its heavy dependency on climate –sensitive sectors such as agriculture, health, forest, and water, among others. Efforts have been made by many African countries to provide long lasting solutions to the problem. These include the ratification of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD); and the launching of the Green Wall for the Sahara Initiative in 2007 and adoption of its Action Plan by the AU Summit.

However, Africa's efforts need support from international partners, including the G8, particularly in the areas of: (i) access to the multilateral funding for adaptation; (ii) financial support to the key economic sectors sensitive to Climate Change, such as infrastructure, agriculture and food security; (iii) full implementation of commitments previously made within the context of implementing the AU/NEPAD Environment Action plan and the prioritization and implementation of the Sub-Regional Environmental Action Plans (SREAPs); and (iv) capacity building of African climate and climate change-related institutions at all levels.

Regarding Peace and Security, it is well acknowledged that it is one of the major challenges in promoting Africa's economic growth and sustainable development. In this respect, the African Union commends those Partners that continue to support the implementation of the AU Peace and Security agenda. This notwithstanding, additional support is needed in a number of areas, including operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (ASPA); funding for AU peace support operations; and implementation of recommendations of the UN Secretary-General relating to the relationship between the UN and regional organizations, in particular the African Union,

to maintain international peace and security, through predictable, sustainable and flexible financing of regional organizations as they undertake peacekeeping operations under UN mandate. Support is also required in the implementation of the Decision taken during the 7th Ordinary Session of the African Union, relating to the development of an AU Policy Framework on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD); and Implementation of the recommendations contained in the "Prodi Report".

Excellencies

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Please allow me also to comment on the G8/Africa Follow-Up Mechanism. You may recall that the issue was raised during the G8 Hokkaido Toyoda Summit in 2008, when a call for the operationalization of the G8/Africa Follow-Up Mechanism was made. This is an issue that needs the support of all of us. It is our hope that the G8 will re-introduce it during its next Summit, as well as decide that the APF follows-up on G8 commitments. In this regard, it is my sincere hope that the APF can, in due course, start using the Africa Action Plan to follow-up on implementation of the G8 commitments. This, according to Africa, will give more credibility to the APF.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and indeed on my own behalf, I wish to sincerely thank the Government and the People of Italy for hosting this important meeting and for the warm hospitality accorded to all the delegations. I also wish to commend the Italian Government, as the G8 Presidency, for its consistent and regular consultations with the African side on the agenda and preparations for the 12th APF Meeting and the La Maddalena G8 Summit. This is a practical way of making the APF and the G8 Africa Out-reach a success.

With these remarks, I thank you all for your kind attention and wish the 12th APF Meeting great success.