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STATEMENT BY

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AT THE OPENING OF THE
9TH AFRICAN PARTNERSHIP FORUM (APF)

ALGIERS, ALGERIA: 12-13 NOVEMBER 2007

Honourable Co-Chairs

Honourable Ministers

Deputy Chief Executive, NEPAD Secretariat

Your Excellencies Ambassadors and Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Representatives of Regional and International Organizations

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honored and privileged to deliver a statement on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, His Excellency Professor Alpha Oumar Konare, at this official opening of the 9th African Partnership Forum (APF). Owing to prior comments, Professor Konare is unable to attend this very importance Forum and sends his apologies. He sends fraternal greetings and wishes the meeting great success and anxiously looks forward to its outcome.

Also, please allow me to pay tribute to His Excellency President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, the Government and the People of Algeria for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to all the delegations and for hosting the 9th Meeting of the African Partnership Forum (APF).

Excellencies

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

The African Union welcomes the fact that the focus of the 9th APF is on governance in development and partnership for development. Addressing these issues is critical in ensuring that Africa attains the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the target date of 2015. This without doubt, therefore, explains why these issues are high on the agenda of the African Union and its NEPAD Programme. The promotion of good governance in our countries, and genuine, equal and strategic partnerships among us are necessary to support efforts towards reducing poverty and attaining sustainable economic growth and development in Africa.

The achievement of the MDGs in Africa, among others, requires scaling up of official development assistance (ODA). In this respect, the development partners have made numerous commitments including the G8 Gleneagles commitment to double ODA by 2010 and the commitment by the European Union countries to collectively attain 0.56 percent of ODA to gross national income (GNI) by 2010 as an intermediate step toward the United Nations (UN) target of 0.7 percent by 2015. However, evidence suggests that despite these commitments, the volume of ODA to Africa, excluding debt relief, humanitarian aid and technical assistance has remained fairly constant in recent times. A recent survey of African policy makers by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), for instance, has shown that while progress has been made in the area of external debt, there has been very limited progress in the realization of the objectives of the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development.

Considerable efforts are, therefore, required by both African governments and international partners to mobilize the resources necessary. Therefore, while applauding the various initiatives on ensuring the realization of the commitments made by partners such as the African Monitor of Arch Bishop Ndungane of South Africa, the organization of yearly African Ministerial Conferences on Financing for Development by the African Development Bank (AfDB), the ECA and African countries beginning in 2006, and the recently launched initiatives of the UN Secretary General and Prime Minister Gordon Brown, we believe the African Partnership Forum needs to play an increasingly important and critical role in ensuring the fulfillment of the various commitments. The Forum needs to develop a joint Africa-G8/OECD mechanism to monitor the realization of the commitments made as well as propose measures to unlock the commitments to improve development effectiveness and outcomes. What I am saying is that it must deliver on its objectives as well as seek to address emerging challenges.

The realization of the commitments will need to be supported by the full implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. But, despite that over 100 countries and development agencies have signed onto the Declaration, it is yet to be implemented. Hence, the African Union calls for its immediate implementation and looks forward to the support of the Africa Partnership Forum, in this regard.

Excellencies

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

The Monterrey Consensus called for, among others, enhanced domestic resources mobilization. But five years since Monterrey, African countries continue to rely on foreign sources of financing. Given that foreign sources of financing may not be timely and predictable, African countries need to give priority to enhancing domestic resources mobilization through, among others, expanding the tax base, improving and strengthening macroeconomic and public expenditure management, and ensuring efficiency of public expenditures. The African Union and its NEPAD Programme will work with African countries in this area in order to gradually reduce their dependence on foreign financing. We strongly believe the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) has an important role to play in this regard, particularly in promoting and ensuring transparency and accountability in public financial management.

African countries realize the role of good governance in reducing poverty and promoting socio-economic development. Hence, they attach great interest and importance to the APRM. This has resulted in twenty-seven (27) African Union Member States having acceded to the APRM, five (5) including Algeria having completed their reviews, and several being at various stages of undertaking their assessments. This has been in spite of the numerous challenges that exist, including lack of adequate funding for the reviews, the slow pace in completing the review cycle and capacity constraints at both the national and continental levels to better manage the mechanism.

In addition, African countries have also achieved significant progress in the area of democratization. This is evidenced among others by the growing number of multi-party elections in several African countries, the participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of government policies, and the adoption of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance in January 2007. The adoption of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance reflects the determination of African Union Member States to promote and strengthen good governance through the

institutionalization of transparency, accountability, and participatory democracy towards the implementation of principles as stated in the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

Despite the various achievements in the area of governance, corruption continues to be a major challenge in many African countries. As a result, they have committed themselves to ratifying the African Union (AU) Convention against Corruption and the United Nations Convention on Anti-Corruption. To date, more than 15 countries have ratified the AU Convention against Corruption whereas more than 40 have ratified the UN Convention on Anti-Corruption. It is important to note that corruption affects two sides, the corrupted and the corruptor, and that both sides should be dealt with to weed out this scourge. As our cooperating partners, therefore, you also have a role to play in the fight against corruption.

In conclusion, I invite you all to combine your energies together towards the realization of the very noble commitments that you have made. I invite you all to rededicate yourselves to the ideals and the spirit of the Paris Declaration and strengthen cooperation in its implementation. I invite you all to work in genuine partnership in support of the attainment of the MDGs in Africa. The Africa Partnership Forum needs to play its rightful role in this regard.

I thank you for your kind attention and wish the meeting great success.

I thank you.