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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE FEDERAL  
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**Statement by Ambassador Negash Keberet , Chargé D’Affaires A.I  
of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on behalf of the  
African Group at the Opening of the  
Coordination Segment of the Substantive Session of the Economic  
and Social Council**

*New York, Tuesday, 8 July, 2008*

Mr. President,

On behalf of the African Group, it gives me a great pleasure to address this general debate of the 2008 Coordination Segment of the Substantive Session of the Economic and Social Council.

The Group wishes to associate itself with the statement made by Antigua and Barbuda on behalf of the Group 77 and China.

Mr. President,

We in developing world, particularly in Africa today are facing massive scale poverty and hunger aggravated by international financial instability and soaring of food and energy prices. These challenges are unprecedented in terms of their scope and scale in impacting negatively our development efforts. Africa, unfortunately, remains to be the most affected region in the world.

This coordination segment of the Council therefore must address these most pressing issues and challenges facing our nations through system wide collective actions and on an integrated and coordinated fashion. The Group believes that the UN system needs to play a pro-active role instead of pursuing the traditional way of reacting to needs emanating from these challenges. In this regard, we believe that the UN system needs to make further progress in its efforts to coordinate early collective responses in advance with the view to tackling the challenges effectively through sustainable solutions. It is therefore important that this coordination segment must deliver actionable and result-oriented guidelines on major issues of coordination.

Mr. President,

The 2007 Ministerial Declaration is a major document that addresses the need to strengthen efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger through global partnership and system wide approach of the UN by delivering effective support to the national and regional actors involved in implementing the Declaration. The Declaration also has underscored the importance of coordinating efforts in mobilizing international support to increase resources for development and capacity building of developing countries, in particular by helping ensure that commitments made by developed countries under various declarations are translated into action.

In this regard, the Group therefore notes the efforts of the United Nations to address these challenges in a comprehensive manner. The Group appreciates the various UN agencies coordinated activities to implement the Declaration through system wide approaches ranging from joint efforts to measure and evaluate progress towards the achievements of the MDGs, to joint studies to advance understanding of complementarities between relevant policy areas and joint actions to build national capacity to formulate comprehensive development strategies and mobilize adequate and predictable resources.

In response to the unfolding global food crisis, the Group also expresses its appreciation for the establishment of the High-Level Task Force by the Secretary-General and welcomes the convening of the Rome Food Summit held last June in addressing the crisis through a unified response by the UN system. In this regard, we wish to commend the efforts of the United Nations to support African countries to ensure food security through designing specific national and regional programmes under the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). We would furthermore like to extend our appreciation to the concerted effort of the Secretary-General to sharpen the focus on Africa's development by launching the UN MDG Gap Task Force and the MDG Africa Steering Group. It is our belief that both initiatives will provide important inputs to the upcoming High-Level Event on the MDGs and High-Level Meeting on Africa's Development Needs in September this year.

The African Group, in this connection, wishes to draw the attention of the Council that last week in Sharm El-Sheikh in the Arab Republic of Egypt, the African Union Summit adopted a declaration entitled "Respond to the Challenges of High Food Prices and Agricultural Development" calling, among other things, for a global partnership that deals with the causes and repercussions of the current food crisis and for the immediate launching of an international High-level dialogue between food exporters and importers from developed and developing countries. The Group seizes this opportunity to reiterate the call on the international community, in particular the UN System to continue to promote the objective of the declaration and support its implementation so as to effectively respond to the challenges of high food prices and agricultural development in Africa in a sustainable manner.



Mr. President,

The Group is also of the view that the ECOSOC should give the necessary guidance and leadership to its subsidiary bodies, including the funds, programmes and specialized agencies, to implement measures for promoting coordination within their respective mandates and areas of competence. Furthermore, in the process of advancing system wide coordination both at normative and operational level, we believe that the UN system should foster its collaboration and coordination with regional economic commissions and other regional entities to effectively address the current global challenges, especially the food crisis.

At the operational level, we believe that the existing frameworks and instruments for country-level support such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) should further be strengthened to streamline the activities of the UN system to respond to countries' development needs and strengthen the national ownership and concentrate on capacity building. In this regard, the activities of the UN system should be executed in a manner that they avoid parallel structures and promote processes of implementation and evaluation under the umbrella of UNDAF.

In concluding Mr. President, our deliberation on a coordinated response of the UN system to the development needs and priorities of developing countries should be viewed within the context of the many new and emerging challenges to development. Therefore, the review of the implementation of the 2007 Ministerial Declaration and the recommendations contained in the report should carefully be assessed from this perspective and from the needs to accord special emphasis to the development needs of Africa. ECOSOC, therefore, as an important organ of the United Nations, needs to further strengthen its guiding role in addressing these issues through system wide coordinated approach.

I thank you.