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**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP BY
MR. ABDEL HAKIM MIHOUBI COUNSELLOR, AT PERMANENT MISSION
OF ALGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON AGENDA ITEM 147:
FINANCING OF THE INTERNATIONAL RESIDUAL DURING THE FIRST
RESUMED PART OF THE SIXTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY- FIFTH COMMITTEE
(New York, 4th March 2015)**

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the African Group on this important agenda item for the Group, in particular on the construction of the new facility for the International Residual Mechanism in Arusha.

The African Group would like to thank Mr. Stephen Cutts, Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services for introducing the Secretary-General's report as well as Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the Advisory Committee for introducing the related report.

We align ourselves with the remarks by the representative of the Republic of South Africa on behalf of Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

The African Group welcomes progress made so far in the implementation of the project in particular the formalization of the land offer by the government granting right of occupancy by the organization free of rental and other fees for initial period of 99 year in line with host country agreement. The Group also welcome information related to conclusion of the construction contract negotiations and appointment of the contractor, outcome of the environmental impact assessment as well as procurement activities undertaken during the reporting period.

The African Group further welcomes the work undertaken at the host government expenses related to completion of construction of temporary access road to the site as well as initiation of key infrastructure activities related to water and power supply. We commend the continued commitments of the host government in facilitating the construction project as well as the work of the Mechanism and the Tribunal.

As started in the past, the African Group continue to believe that effective interaction with the host country authorities plays a crucial role in the project implementation, we therefore encourage the Secretary-General to ensure continued co-operation between the organization and the host country in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group has taken a good note of the information related to project oversight and governance and we look forward to receive updates on oversight coverage for activities undertaken so far as well as those planned in the future in the context of respective agenda items. The Group would also like to emphasize the need for close interaction between the headquarters in New York and project management team in the ground so as to mitigate potential risk, ensure accountability and guarantee expected results.

Mr. Chairman,

The African Group would like to emphasize the need for Secretary General to continue his efforts to ensure the Mechanism to continue to include local knowledge, capacity and know how throughout its implementation of the project as per given mandate.

With regard to the lessons learned and best practices, the Group would like to re-emphasize the need to ensure errors, omissions and other anomalies experienced in other capital projects do not re-occur in this project. We therefore reaffirm our call on the importance of the project management team to continue to draw lessons and best practice from a wide range of capital projects undertaken locally and in the region. It will be disappointment to see some common problems occurred in other capital projects repeat in Arusha.

Mr. Chairman,

The African Group has carefully studied the information related to project schedule, expenditures to date and the use of contingency. We would like to express our concern with regard to the expected delay and expect that every effort will be made to ensure the project is completed within the time-frame. We will be interested to learn the details of a number of these key elements during our informal consultations.

In conclusion, the African Group would like to assure you of our readiness to engage constructively for the speedy conclusion of this important agenda item.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.