

*Mission Permanente
du Royaume du Maroc
Genève*



البعثة الدائمة
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STATEMENT DELIVERED BY

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO**

**ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP AT THE 58TH SESSION OF THE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE UNHCR**

Geneva, October 1st, 2007.

M. Chairman,

Allow me at the outset to assure you of the African Group support in your endeavour. The Group is confident that your experience and your diplomatic skill are a guarantee for a successful outcome of our meeting. Our thanks go to His Excellency M. John Holmes, Under Secretary General for Humanitarian affairs and Emergency relief coordinator, and to the High Commissioner for their very interesting introductory remarks. We take also this opportunity to extend our congratulations to the UNHCR Secretariat for the good preparation of this meeting. The African Group welcomes Costa Rica and Estonia as new members of the Executive Committee. It takes this opportunity to express its sympathy to countries that have recently suffered from natural catastrophes.

M. Chairman,

The Challenges facing the UNHCR have been increasingly exacerbated by rising intolerance, fuelled by security concerns and confusion in public opinion between migrants and refugees. Evolving in this environment, the UNHCR should focus its effort on preserving asylum and rebuilding trust in asylum systems. In this regard, the African Group is of the view that an enhanced cooperation among all stakeholders, including UNHCR, Intergovernmental Organisations, Civil Society and media should be encouraged in order to promote tolerance. Preserving asylum means opposing all forms of refoulement. Keeping in mind the protection as the main goal of UNHCR activities, the African Group supports the efforts aiming at strengthening the protection capacities that should be build in both developed and developing countries. Building skills, institutions and coalitions helps to promote international cooperation and solidarity and facilitate real and fair burden –sharing.

M. Chairman,

While mindful of the improvement that still need to be embarked upon to make the cluster approach efficient in respect to the UNHCR involvement in IDP's operations, the African Group commends the launch and implementation of the cluster approach in African pilot countries. For example, in Uganda, which was one of the pilot countries for the new cluster approach, over 300 000 displaced persons had been able to return home. The African Group supports the cluster approach implementation and the involvement of the UNHCR, as a predictable and fully engaged partner. In the same vein, the activities trough which the High Commissariat is responsible for the protection, emergency shelter and camp coordination and management clusters in the framework of the collective response by the United Nations System and the broader humanitarian community to situations of internal displacement, are commendable.

The African Group supports the UNHCR and his partners efforts aiming at enhancing the protection of refugees including the managerial and financial reforms. In this respect, being the largest beneficiary countries from the UNHCR activities, the African Group noticed, with satisfaction, the decrease in cases of refoulement of asylum seekers and refugees. Thanks to the extended assistance of the High Commissariat, the number of states that established procedures for border

monitoring and measures to assist border guards to distinguish asylum seekers from migrants has increased, as well as the number of UNHCR operations having in place standard operating procedures to prevent and respond to sexual and gender based violence including systematic and timely reporting. Accordingly, the African Group is pleased to note that the High Commissioner strategy for 2008 – 2009 is articulated on the strengthening of the protection of refugees within broader migration movement, protecting internally displaced persons when mandated to do so either directly or within the agreed inter agency framework of collective responsibilities, maintaining the civilian character of refugee and IDP's settlement and assisting stateless individuals and groups, particularly in the context of protracted situations, to realize their rights. In this regard, the African Group reiterates its support to the successful implementation of the cluster approach in the benefit of IDP's, particularly in Africa.

M. Chairman,

A strong UNHCR able to deliver its mandate needs to adapt its working methods to the surrounding environment. In this regard, the African Group commends the ongoing reform of the UNHCR Secretariat including the progress in the moving of the administrative staff to Budapest. We are of the view that this reform should be carried out in a transparent manner, in accordance with the principles governing international relations. It should provide the UNHCR with a swifter and more flexible response capacity. Overlaps with other key players in the humanitarian sphere should be avoided. Regional offices should serve as needs assessment platforms for evaluating resource requirements, and expenditures at the headquarters level should be rationalised in order to take account of the real needs of the Office.

The African group supports the approval authorizing the UNHCR to increase the 2007 appropriation reserve for the New or Additional activities mandate related to 75 millions us dollars, approves a 2008 appropriation of 75 millions us dollars, on the understanding that the level of appropriation will be reviewed in 2009. In the meantime, it reiterates its call for the launching of further consultations in order to fine tune the proposed structure of the budget.

UNHCR had enough evaluation indicators to be able to plan its intervention, coordination and capacity-building activities and quantify the host country contributions and needs in order to devise better and more coherent action plans in favour of refugees and vulnerable persons. Appropriate resources must be mobilised to certain regions of the world, particularly Africa. Reintegration of repatriated refugees in post conflict situations requires some investment in order to rehabilitate administrative and legal structures, to consolidate assistance and long term development programmes within countries plans to sustain the pace of return.

In conclusion, M. Chairman, the African Group, while reiterating its full commitment to UNHCR activities, would like to extend its support to the draft conclusion on the Children at risk. The Group take this opportunity to thank MS Emina Tudakovic, Rapporteur and the Secretariat for their tireless efforts in this regard.

I Thank you.