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Official Records

President: Mr. Kerim (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

In the absence of the President, Ms. Bethel (Bahamas), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 64 and 47 (continued)

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

(a) New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/203)

(b) Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/204)

2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Particularly in Africa

Note by the Secretary-General (A/62/321)

Mr. Yousfi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for the reports made available to us on this agenda item and for the very useful presentation of the reports.

My delegation believes that the two reports of the Secretary-General are an excellent basis for our deliberations on the causes of conflict and the annual review of progress and support by the international community for the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). We are also pleased to note that considerable progress has

been made with respect to peace, security and development in Africa.

With respect to security, which still is fundamental to the maintenance of peace and to long-term development, we support the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The recommendations stress the crucial and decisive need to allocate additional resources, both human and financial, to support the resources and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations conducted by the African Union in Darfur, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Côte d'Ivoire.

In this connection, Algeria is pleased to note the establishment by the United Nations in 2006 of a cross-cutting programme that focuses on providing full support to African peacekeeping operations, and we welcome the efforts made by the United Nations to reinforce the operational capacities of the African Peace and Security Council and its related institutions, such as the Panel of the Wise, the African standby force and the Continental Early Warning System.

Despite the positive trends, the report also draws our attention to the impact of complex problems affecting stability in Africa, in particular infectious diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, the effects of global warming and climate change, extremely high levels of unemployment among youth, trafficking in persons, massive population shifts, the appearance of terrorist networks and growing transnational organized crime.

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Against this background, the new challenges to peace and security require a new approach based on African capacities, a proper understanding of the problems, political will and strategic determination to restore ownership of reconstruction and peacebuilding activities to Africa.

With respect to development-related activities, my delegation agrees with the analysis and the concerns voiced with respect to evaluating international support for the new programme for Africa's development. The assessment the Secretary-General gives in his report points out that indeed, despite significant initiatives and commitments undertaken by development partners following the Millennium Summit, such as the Group of Eight (G-8) decision in Gleneagles on debt alleviation and official development assistance (ODA), as well as the support graciously provided by non-G-8 countries, most African countries are, unfortunately, lagging significantly in implementing most of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by the year 2015.

The implementation of the multilateral and bilateral debt alleviation initiative, as well as progress made in other areas, such as effective liberalization of international trade, the final arrangements of the Doha Round — these should be important stages in implementing the objectives set by the international community for development on the African continent.

In order to do this, we believe it is important — indeed, imperative — for all of the international community, in particular developed countries, to be more closely involved and honour the commitments that they undertook at the Millennium Summit in the year 2000, as well as those of the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey in 2002, the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002 and the 2005 World Summit.

The United Nations system must play a significant role in helping support African efforts to develop the continent. Such cooperation is essential in order to ensure a global framework for cooperation, involving solidarity and partnership and designed to mobilize the resources necessary to combat underdevelopment and poverty and to reduce the widening gap between North and South.

Algeria has spared no effort in implementing the Millennium Development Goals in its national

development policy through specific actions and has also worked within the NEPAD framework to promote all efforts designed to ensure development of the African continent. The consolidation of reforms at the domestic level via the enhancement of democracy and the rule of law, which constitute important levers for achieving good governance, is part of the framework that we are following in modernizing our State, our economy and our society.

It is in this spirit that Algeria has voluntarily submitted itself to peer review, under the African mechanism set up to this end. This initiative is designed for African countries to be able to make specific contributions to enshrining good governance in each African country and on the continent as a whole. A report was submitted to heads of States members of the African Peer Review Mechanism in Accra in June 2007; the report was noted very positively by our Mechanism, which was very pleased to see Algeria's considerable progress in the economic, social and good governance areas.

In conclusion, I should like to note with satisfaction the growing number of African countries that have voluntarily chosen to submit themselves to this peer review mechanism, which is indeed a clear success in the NEPAD initiative in promoting a real culture of good governance and peace on the continent.

Mr. Swe (Myanmar): May I first of all take this opportunity to express my delegation's deep gratitude to the President of the General Assembly, the Chairman of the Group of 77 and China, the Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and all others for their messages of condolence on the passing away of His Excellency General Soe Win, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar.

I wish also to extend our heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of Pakistan on the tragic incident yesterday that resulted in the loss of life of over 120 people. Terrorism in any form or manifestation must be condemned.

I wish to thank the Secretary-General and the World Health Organization for their very useful reports. Myanmar fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on this agenda item. My delegation also associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Singapore on behalf of the member States of ASEAN.

The statement of the President of the General Assembly has highlighted the deadly impact of malaria on the world community, particularly on the African continent. Almost a million people have perished in Africa owing to malaria — a situation that is preventable, provided the necessary resources are forthcoming. In addition to the human toll, the economic cost of malaria to Africa is around \$12 billion. This has negatively impacted on people's health, as well as on the development prospects for the entire African continent. The status quo must not be allowed to continue. We strongly urge the international community to provide effective assistance and adequate resources to advance the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) health strategy.

NEPAD is a mechanism that represents the collective desire and commitment of the African countries to meet the challenges they face, so that they can achieve sustainable economic and social development. More importantly, it is a vision that encourages African countries to take charge of their own destiny by fighting poverty and promoting development. Notwithstanding the determined efforts taken by African countries, the prognosis for the continent achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 remains bleak, particularly in the sub-Sahara region.

The situation calls for action, not only on the part of the African continent but also by the international community. Africa has demonstrated its commitment. The international community must do its part. That would entail further buttressing the Global Partnership for Development and the implementation of development commitments fully and expeditiously.

We share the concern about the overall decline of Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows to developing countries, including Africa. Commitments were made by the Group of Eight at Gleneagles in 2005 to double the aid to Africa by 2010. Despite a \$2.3 billion increase in ODA for the period 2004-2006, there is still a shortfall of some \$3.5 billion, if the pledge is to be implemented in full. Taking into consideration the fresh commitment by the Group of Eight at the Heiligendamm summit in 2007, we hope to see the fulfilment of these commitments in full and on time.

Free trade is an engine of growth that can facilitate the development roles of African countries. To take full advantage of the benefits of free trade, developing countries, particularly those in Africa, need a favourable international economic environment. That is why we need the Doha Round to be brought to a successful conclusion as soon as possible. To do that, we need, among other things, to resolve issues that are of importance to developing countries, particularly issues affecting Africa, such as agricultural market access and greater reduction in trade distorting agricultural subsidies. For developing countries, it is vital that they be in a position to participate effectively in the Doha Round negotiations. In this regard, my delegation fully supports the request by African countries for assistance in meeting sanitary and technical standards, and the costs of implementing other agreements of the World Trade Organization.

By adopting the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), African leaders have reaffirmed their commitment to a common vision of eradicating poverty in order to place their countries on the path towards sustainable development. It is incumbent on the international community and the United Nations to help Africa. We are pleased that the United Nations is doing its part and that it remains an important pillar of international support for Africa. While important steps towards providing support to the African Union and NEPAD have been taken in recent years by the United Nations, it must seek to further strengthen cooperation.

In sum, NEPAD is a regional initiative in which Africa will play a leading role. But without concerted international support, Africa will remain behind schedule in meeting the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. In this global village, we must work together and support African countries to achieve their worthy goals.

Mr. Nsengimana (Rwanda): First of all, I want to present, on behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, our condolences to Myanmar and Pakistan.

I would like express my delegation's appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and to the World Health Organization for their respective reports under consideration today.

Rwanda fully associates itself with the statements of the Group of 77 and China and the Group of the

African States. We have a few additional points to make.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is a vision to which Rwanda and other African countries attach great importance. It is a vision that offers the promise of Africa's renewal and development, with highest priority being accorded to the eradication of poverty, sustainable growth and development, integration into the global economy, and the empowerment of women. It is an initiative led, owned and managed by the African Union that calls for and recognizes the serious commitment from and the implementation of programmes by African Governments, as well as international support and partnership from development partner countries.

We welcome the policy measures and actions taken by African countries and organizations in the implementation of NEPAD in the areas of infrastructure development, agriculture, health, education, the environment, information and communication technology (ICT), science and technology, gender and peer review. Rwanda hosted the first country round table of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme at which the Rwanda Compact, representing a mutual commitment between Rwanda, the Commission of the African Union, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and development partners, was signed. The round table facilitated the undertaking of a comprehensive study to define national targets for the Programme and to delineate national policy challenges and support from ministries of finance and donors at the country level.

Rwanda was among the first countries to accede to and complete the peer review process under the African Peer Review Mechanism. We welcomed the views and recommendations of the peer review panel and are working in a constructive spirit to implement reforms that will benefit the country.

Rwanda is also proud to be an active participant in the NEPAD ICT vision. Rwanda was the first country to officially launch an e-schools initiative under NEPAD in October 2006. We have also launched a "One Laptop per Child" programme to be completed by 2012, a joint initiative between the Rwanda Government and leaders from the American private sector. Rwanda is also part of a 12-country initiative called the Kigali Protocol which aims to provide open

access and affordable prices for high quality, high-speed and reliable electronic communications for end-users. Additionally, we are also proud to be hosting the "Connect Africa" summit in Kigali at the end of this month.

Rwanda welcomes the progress made so far in the implementation of international commitments on debt relief. Rwanda is a beneficiary of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, which has freed resources for use in social development programmes. We also welcome progress on trade and South-South cooperation.

However, much more work still needs to be done in order for developing countries to fulfil their official development assistance (ODA) commitments. It is disappointing that ODA declined in real terms in 2005 and stalled in 2006. There is concern that it will decline even further in 2007.

Thus, the commitments of the Group of Eight countries in 2005 at Gleneagles to double aid to Africa by 2010 will become a challenge to fulfil. We therefore agree with the Secretary-General's assessment that there is need for new aid architecture based on closer coordination, greater harmonization, less fragmentation and better allocation of aid, as well as a genuine commitment to deliver on pledges.

The special needs of Africa are of such importance that they require the sustained attention of the United Nations. Rwanda therefore supports the convening of a high-level meeting on Africa's development needs during the sixty-third session. We believe that this meeting will help focus attention on Africa's unique challenges. We look forward to the support of all Member States for that meeting.

With respect to United Nations support for NEPAD, it is critical that the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, which oversees support for NEPAD, be strengthened. The Office is of great importance to Africa and plays a very important role in coordinating international support. The Office therefore cannot continue to fulfil the important mandate the General Assembly has assigned to it without a substantive head at the Under-Secretary-General level. We therefore wish to reiterate the call of the African Group for that post and other vacancies in the Office to be filled as soon as possible.

Regarding agenda item 64 (b) "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa", I wish to acknowledge Africa's contributions to peace and security in the region. The African Peace and Security Architecture has been established, comprising the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council, a Panel of the Wise, a continental early-warning system and the beginnings of an African standby force. Those elements have already played a very constructive role in promoting peace and security in the region, and will continue to do so. Their capacities will be strengthened by the 10-year United Nations capacity-building programme for the African Union, which envisages, *inter alia*, enhanced cooperation in all phases of conflict management, early warning and preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, post-conflict reconstruction, peacebuilding and human rights.

Rwanda is proud to contribute to these efforts, both through the AU Peace and Security Council and through troop and police contributions to the AU and the United Nations. We welcome the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on item 64 (b) (A/62/204) and look forward to their implementation, especially in terms of capacity-building.

Malaria imposes an unacceptable toll on the most vulnerable people, mostly in Africa, which accounts for 90 per cent of malaria deaths. The disease compounds the effects of poverty, weakening productive populations and thereby reducing their economic productivity. Yet the disease is preventable. We welcome the efforts of development partners in supporting Africa in confronting this problem. Also, we must commend private initiatives like that of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, whose support for a malaria vaccine has begun to yield positive results.

However, the World Health Organization report acknowledges that there is still a chronic lack of funding and capacity to support prevention programmes, such as those promoting insecticidal nets and indoor residual spraying. There is also a lack of funding for research. We must work together to address this problem so that malaria ceases to be such a challenge to socio-economic development in Africa.

Mr. Constantino (Angola): Allow me first to say that my delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Pakistan and Benin

on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the African Group respectively.

We take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his fifth consolidated report on the progress in implementation of and international support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (A/62/203), as well as for the report on the Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, Especially in Africa (A/62/321).

NEPAD represents a unique opportunity to meet the special needs of Africa through a global partnership. The success of this partnership is greatly dependant upon the degree to which each stakeholder honours its respective commitments. In this connection, my delegation is pleased with the progress achieved thus far, but remains convinced that our efforts remain insufficient and have not reached the limits of our abilities. This is evidenced by the fact that Africa remains the sole continent not on track to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

During the past year, African leaders, the NEPAD secretariat and development partners have engaged in a variety of forums aimed at developing national, subregional and regional projects in priority areas, such as agriculture, health, education and infrastructure; many of these are awaiting funding. In that connection, my delegation is of the view that if we are to succeed in achieving sustained economic growth and sustainable development in Africa, through which we can eradicate poverty and hunger, substantial progress is required in the following areas.

First, we have to recognize that the challenge for development partners is to shift their assistance frameworks from humanitarian and emergency assistance to predictable quantitative and qualitative increases in development assistance in the social and economic areas. Secondly, we must all do our share to greatly improve the effectiveness of development assistance, while recognizing that that cannot be achieved without tackling the coordination of policies, measures and rules at all levels. Thirdly, we must all do more to honour our commitments. Scaling up aid involves the provision of additional adequate and sustained funding to meet the development needs of Africa. Finally, the international community should support reconstruction efforts aimed at economic competitiveness and capacity-building in the African private sector.

The objectives and action plans enunciated in NEPAD are consistent with internationally agreed development goals, and a global partnership is required for their achievement. My delegation is of the view that the United Nations has a very important role to play in that connection.

Within the United Nations system and beyond, a key function of the unique partnership to meet the special needs of Africa is maintaining the integrity of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa. In addition to playing its advocacy role, the Office can monitor to ensure that coordinated planning, monitoring, implementation and evaluation of activities is being carried out by the entire United Nations system, as directed by heads of State in the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1) and the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences in the economic and social fields.

In conclusion, my delegation looks forward to the urgent filling of all existing vacancies in the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa. We consider that to be critical to the implementation of NEPAD.

Mr. Belinga-Eboutou (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): My delegation is grateful to the Secretary-General for his two reports — one on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (A/62/203) and the other relating to causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/62/204) — submitted, respectively, under sub-items (a) and (b) of agenda item 64. Those two detailed documents are full of information and very enlightening, particularly with regard to the international community's fulfilment of its commitments vis-à-vis Africa.

The reports also shed light on the resolve of African countries themselves to intervene in conflicts in order to maintain peace and — to borrow the Secretary-General's excellent phrase — to achieve a conflict-free Africa. In fact, at the continental and subregional levels, they have developed a Peace and Security Architecture supported by mechanisms designed to predict, prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. The delegation of Cameroon hopes that the peace and security architecture developed by the Economic Community of Central African States will be duly described in the next report, as the mechanisms of the Economic Community of West African States and

the Southern African Development Community are in the current one.

It is with the same concern to strengthen their security capacity that African countries are developing schools and centres for peacekeeping training. Thus, in addition to the centres in Mali and Ghana, there will soon be an international school in Cameroon. United Nations Member States are invited to hear a presentation about the school on Monday, 22 October 2007, at 11 a.m. in Conference Room 3.

We also thank the Secretary-General for the quality of the statement that he made as we began our consideration of this item. It was a strong and detailed statement. It encouraged us, because the Secretary-General confirmed that Africa and its special needs are the top priority for him. Africa is pleased to find in him an advocate who is convincing because he is convinced.

These two reports clearly show the scope and diversity of the activities carried out by African countries and the international community to implement NEPAD, as well as recommendations aimed at making Africa a conflict-free zone of peace. While efforts on all sides have made commendable progress, the situation in Africa remains worrisome. The results achieved to date remain far from commonly accepted goals and objectives. In a moving plea, the Permanent Representative of Benin, His Excellency Mr. Jean-Marie Ehouzou, speaking in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of African States, described the situation much more effectively than I could. I thank him for his persuasive power and his eloquence in the service of Africa.

In any case, the task before us is immense. So too is the resolve that we must demonstrate if we really want to move decisively towards the results that we hope to achieve. From that perspective, the United Nations has an essential role to play, as the Secretary-General recalled here yesterday in his introductory statement (see A/62/PV.27). The peoples of the United Nations who are in Africa expect the Organization to play a role within the international community that encourages, mobilizes and coordinates contributions and initiatives to supplement the efforts of African countries.

The Secretary-General has understood that well. Since he assumed his duties, he has shown that he is

deeply involved in seeking solutions to African issues. In his report, he wrote:

“Appropriate and adequate institutional arrangements within the United Nations will hold the key to the success of our efforts in support of Africa. I intend to revamp these efforts by establishing greater institutional coherence among the main Secretariat entities dealing with issues that concern Africa, as well as establishing stronger system-wide organizational arrangements to ensure full implementation of activities in favour of Africa. As part of this approach I will seek to formulate strategic actions for the United Nations and the international community in support of achieving sustainable development in a conflict-free Africa.” (A/62/204, para. 79)

This brings me back to the need to strengthen the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Africa. As we said on 9 October from this rostrum, that Office, as an operational structure, has three roles. It must mobilize public opinion and resources, coordinate the various initiatives within the United Nations system for implementing NEPAD, and follow up actively on the various contributions made by the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, the China-Africa Forum, the Group of 8, the European Union and, more recently, India, the Republic of Korea and Brazil towards a more innovative North-South or South-South partnership for the development of Africa.

The Office could be strengthened in the following manner, although this is not an exhaustive list of possible measures. The first would be preserving the integrity and high level of the Office, allowing it to operate in an integrated manner and at an appropriate level of representation and dialogue with its various partners as it plays the strategic triple role I referred to earlier.

The second measure would be filling all the vacancies in the Office, and particularly the post of Special Adviser. If that post remains vacant, it will clearly weaken the Office’s management and leadership and hinder the implementation of programmes. In their reports to this session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions stress that point clearly.

The third measure would be enhancing the Office’s capacity to play its triple role. In that connection, we believe that it would be wise to create additional posts and operational resources, as the Secretary-General proposes, in other priority areas, such as disarmament, the maintenance of peace, human rights and, in the near future, political affairs. That capacity is all the more necessary in that the specific needs of Africa, as identified by the heads of State and Government at the 2000 Millennium Summit and the 2005 World Summit, must be duly planned, programmed, followed up and assessed in a strategic and concrete manner in the annual or multi-year work plans of the United Nations system. Moreover, the various processes launched by Africa’s partners must also be followed up and exploited methodically.

The fourth and last measure is clarifying the role of the Office of the Special Adviser vis-à-vis other Secretariat entities. Such clarification would avoid any potential duplication and other confusion. If properly organized, the Office would work in synergy with other entities of the system, but would also have a unique central role that would highlight both its added value and its own distinct nature.

My delegation makes these proposals because we should like our current debate to lead to conclusions that would enable the Secretary-General to propose a set of measures to strengthen the programmes, administrative structure and budget that support the United Nations work for enhanced development in Africa. Indeed, that is what the General Assembly has called for tirelessly in the Second, Third and Fifth Committees and other subsidiary bodies.

It is seven years to the deadline of 2015. At that point, we will assess how far peoples have travelled towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The reports before us, unfortunately, show that Africa is unlikely to meet those goals if its development partners do not live up to all of their commitments within the agreed time frame.

Yesterday, the General Assembly began the debate, ending today, on the reports on Africa’s development. In our view, the backdrop to this debate is very meaningful because our meeting is taking place shortly after two major events. The first was the commemoration by men of good will throughout the world of the fortieth anniversary of Pope Paul VI’s encyclical *Populorum Progressio*. That prophetic

encyclical on the progress of peoples is more relevant today than ever. It offered a new approach to the expectations of the poorest peoples and countries among us. Today, more than ever before, development is indeed the new name of peace. If we seek peace, we should not prepare for war; we should fight poverty. If we want peace, we should work for respect for all human rights, including the right to development and the right to food.

The backdrop to the debate ending today is also symbolic because our deliberations are taking place shortly after 17 October, when we marked a day set aside to reject poverty throughout the world. As members know, 17 October was established by the General Assembly as the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. On that occasion, Pope Benedict XVI called upon men and women to act in three key areas: first, to work even harder to eliminate the causes of poverty and its tragic consequences; secondly, to call on their sense of dignity to find grounds for rejecting what is unacceptable and to find the strength to believe in a better future and the joy of helping one another; and thirdly, to fight side by side, in a generous spirit, against poverty.

Let us heed that appeal as we conclude our debate on development and peace in Africa. The end of this debate must mean the beginning of an effective and complete implementation of our commitments. The situation in Africa calls for greater creativity in finding solutions, greater resolve in the actions to be undertaken and greater generosity in implementing those actions. Africa is the continent of the future, and when Africa awakens, it will remember its good Samaritans.

The Acting President: I now call on the observer of the Observer State of the Holy See.

Monsignor Auza (Holy See): Resolutions 61/229 and 61/230 and the reports of the Secretary-General highlight many positive signs of the commitment of the peoples and Governments of Africa to act as protagonists in the promotion of peace and of their own economic and social development. They also express the international community's responsibilities towards Africa.

Figures showing accelerated economic growth in Africa as a whole during the past years are particularly encouraging. That was best exemplified by last year's growth rate, which was the highest in the last 30 years.

It is therefore with pleasure that my delegation salutes the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) in its seventh year of existence. This Africa-owned and Africa-led vision and strategic framework for Africa's renewal has contributed in no small measure to this growth. Moreover, although designed to address the challenges facing the continent through closer cooperation among the African countries, NEPAD also opens and prepares Africa for greater international cooperation. Indeed, one of its primary objectives is to halt the marginalization of Africa in the globalization process and enhance its full and beneficial integration into the global economy. Africa has started to reap the fruit of this wise decision, as seen in the aforementioned highest growth rate, which was in part due to favourable international economic conditions.

Nevertheless, these positive signs stand in stark contrast with situations of conflict and the reality of extreme forms of poverty, which are difficult to uproot. Africa still lags behind most other regions of the world. Thus the international community's support remains a decisive factor in assisting Africa in responding to daunting challenges and in consolidating recent gains.

In the area of peace and security, the Holy See wishes to renew its support for a global approach to the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa. Efforts in those areas should be guided by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, assisted by the Panel of the Wise and the African standby force. Initiatives such as the continental early warning system and the regional conflict warning systems deserve the international community's generous support, so that the continent's increasing assumption of its share of responsibility in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding may be further consolidated.

In the socio-economic field, there is no need to look far and wide for ways and means to support Africa: in resolution 61/229, paragraphs 19 to 25, several are enumerated. To address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development, Africa would need a comprehensive solution to the unsustainable debt burdens of some countries, fairer access to world markets through equitable integration into the international trading system, the timely disbursement by the developed countries of the agreed 0.7 per cent of gross national product as official development assistance, better harmonization between

international support and NEPAD priorities, greater and long-term investments in Africa's public and private sector, transfer of technology and better educational and health systems, to cite a few.

Africa's integration into the international trading system should help it build its capacity to compete without reducing its ability to safeguard its citizens from the undesirable consequences of structural adjustments and trade liberalization. The international community is called upon to assist African countries in developing policies that promote a culture of solidarity, so that their economic development may go hand in hand with integral human development. On the other hand, good governance and institution-building efforts, the correct use of aid and anti-corruption measures are primary responsibilities of the recipient countries and are essential if international aid is to bear fruit.

At the end of the day, any new trade development — particularly the new North-South regional agreements — must improve on what is already in place and must avoid imposing conditions to the detriment of Africans. One sector that is vital to Africa's capacity to both ensure its food security and compete in the global economy is agriculture, as seen in the sensitive issue of agricultural subsidies in developed countries. An equitable solution to the imbalances in international agricultural trade is urgently needed, as is an approach to the subsidies on exports from developed countries that is consistent with and satisfactory for African agriculture.

Education must be at the heart of NEPAD objectives and priorities, not only as a goal in itself but also as a means in achieving the other objectives. Strategic partnerships in education and skills formation between institutions in Africa and in the developed world will no doubt accelerate progress in all sectors.

Those partnerships should extend to the movement of skilled labour. Africa, in fact, is suffering from brain drain, as much of its educated, talented and skilled human capital — especially in the health sector — leave the continent for better economic opportunities in rich countries. There is real risk, therefore, that the hard-earned investments in African higher education will yield fewer and fewer returns to Africa, even while it benefits countries where African skilled labour is being employed.

Persistent wars in Africa and their deleterious effects in terms of the displaced and refugees and of

the heinous crimes of the recruitment of child soldiers and violence against women, should remind us that peace and collective security are inseparable from human development.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/2 of 19 October 1994, I now call on the observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Ms. Johnson (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): I am pleased to be able to speak here today on matters of particular relevance to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

The largest humanitarian needs resulting from poverty, health crises and disasters are in Africa, and it is with grave concern that we remind ourselves today, at the mid-point to 2015, that most African countries are not on track to meet most, if not all, of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). People are dying of AIDS and related diseases, leaving behind destitute families and children, many also HIV-positive. Droughts, floods, locusts and conflicts cause or exacerbate food insecurity and vulnerability to disease. Having witnessed the recent and unprecedented flooding that affected one million people across 20 African countries over the past several months, we are all the more concerned about rising humanitarian needs and the long-term toll they take on years of development gains.

It is unacceptable that today, 19 October, 3,000 children will die of malaria. It is unacceptable that 14 African children will die during the few minutes it will take for me to make this statement here in the General Assembly. It is all the more unacceptable given that those deaths can be prevented through personal protection, mosquito control and early treatment. Today, malaria threatens 40 per cent of the world's population, and we expect that figure to increase as climate and environmental changes take it into new territories.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) aims to eradicate poverty and place African countries on a path of sustainable growth and development, including meeting the Millennium Development Goals in health and education. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies endorses those priorities and also works towards them. Our programmes in Africa

account for 40 per cent of our funding appeal in 2006 and 2007.

The positive news is that, by working in strong global and local partnerships and by building the local capacities of national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, we see progress being made in many African countries by Africans themselves. Indeed, despite the daunting humanitarian needs, there is progress in Africa, and we have registered many achievements. Today, I will highlight simply one.

The report recently issued by the United Nations Children's Fund on malaria and children shows that a rapid improvement in the supply and distribution of mosquito nets between 2004 and 2006 has resulted in a tripling of coverage ratios in 16 countries. Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have contributed to those results as partners of the Roll Back Malaria initiative. Our community-based volunteers, who walk the last mile and visit the last house on the road, have helped turn planned campaigns into real successes. In 2006, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies participated in 17 malaria campaigns in 14 countries, helping to distribute some 27 million mosquito nets. By the end of this year, we anticipate having completed 13 new campaigns and delivered 28 million nets. Preparations are currently under way in Madagascar, Mali, Gabon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Congo Brazzaville and Gambia. In 2008, we plan to continue at that pace and anticipate needing some 21 million more nets.

We believe that NEPAD is founded on two key principles that are necessary to achieving results in Africa. The first is anchoring the development of Africa in its own resources and in the resourcefulness of its people. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies recognizes that the lack of human resources for health is a cause of major health delivery gaps, particularly in rural areas of sub-Saharan African countries. We see that as an important impediment to achieving the MDGs and as an area where we can contribute.

As auxiliaries to their public authorities, Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies can help improve the quality and size of the health workforce in their countries, while recognizing the Government's responsibility in that area. That is why the IFRC, in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Southern Africa HIV/AIDS

Information Dissemination Service, has developed a generic training package on HIV/AIDS, which can be used to train community volunteers in treatment literacy, mobilization, preparedness and adherence.

The key to success is partnership. As auxiliaries to their public authorities, national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies are ideally placed to help accomplish the humanitarian goals of their Governments at all levels. As community-based organizations, they can help link development at the national level to the efforts at the local level of everyday people working to improve their lives. We believe that for partnerships to be real, equitable and transparent, they need to respond to the aspirations and expectations of vulnerable people and communities.

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies welcome partnerships with organizations working towards similar goals. We believe that for partnerships to be effective, they need to be built on solid organizational capacity, on complementary skills, and on the maximization of resources. The memorandum of understanding signed between the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the WHO's Regional Office for Africa in May of this year is one example of such a partnership and is a milestone that should help better support the efforts of African Governments in scaling up comprehensive HIV interventions at the community level.

I have outlined today how health interventions, institutional and human capacity-building, and partnerships at national and local levels can spur development in Africa. Those issues will be addressed at the upcoming International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent which, under the theme "Together for humanity", will draw attention to the need for collective and collaborative action and partnerships between States, the Red Cross and Red Crescent global network, and other humanitarian actors, such as the United Nations and non-governmental organizations. The International Conference will also examine the unique value and specific nature of the role of national societies as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field.

Let me close by highlighting two areas in which we think Governments can act differently and more effectively to enable our work and shared goals.

First, they can better partner with national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. We call on donor and national Governments to meet the intentions stated in the Rabat Declaration on human development and on strengthening health systems and human resources for health, in cooperation with national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Secondly, there is the question of funding and resource mobilization. As highlighted in the many reports that fed into our discussions yesterday and today, funding remains inadequate to effectively tackle the challenges of malaria, HIV and development in Africa. We call on Governments to mobilize resources and funding to that end and to apply the principles and good practice of humanitarian donorship in the efficient delivery of that assistance.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and our 53 national societies in Africa know too well the daily difficulties and tragedies of poor families and communities in Africa. But we also know — because our national societies are grounded in that reality — the tremendous strength and capacity that are in those same families and those same communities. We are convinced that, working in global and local partnerships, we can achieve our goals, and we pledge to do our part to do just that.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on these items. The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda items 64 and 47.

The meeting rose at 4.20 p.m.