

**REMARKS DELIVERED BY A. P. ETANOMARE OSIO, MINISTER,
PERMANENT MISSION OF NIGERIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON BEHALF
OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, ON THE CAUSES OF CONFLICT AND
PROMOTION OF DURABLE PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN
AFRICA**

New York, 19 May 2000

Mr. Co-Chairman,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I thank you and the Co-Chairman for the able and painstaking manner in which you have conducted our deliberations in this session for the past 5 days. Our thanks also go to Mr. Nitin Desai and his team from DESA and to all the staff of OSCAL for production of the excellent documentation which has guided our deliberation. We may not be able to thank enough the distinguished representatives of the various funds and programmes of the United Nations system – UNDP, FAO, UNHCR, UNICEF, ILO, UNIFEM, ECA, UNCTAD, UNAIDS, WFP, UNDA, UNSIA – and of the Bretton Woods institutions, who have come from far and near to brief the Working Group.

Mr. Co-Chairman,

During our first session, we did request that these agencies be invited to enlighten the Working Group regarding implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's Report on the *Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa*. From the documentation, they have provided and, more so, from the exchange of views they have expressed after presentations, we have seen a true value added to the work of the Working Group. We appreciate this.

Mr. Co-Chairman,

A crucial aspect of our work which the Group of 77 and China believes needs highlighting is the outstanding problems or obstacles to the implementation of the Secretary-General's recommendations. And, in this regard, we are not advocating that problems or obstacles be "invented". Rather, we need, above all else, to have those areas of outstanding problems or obstacles clearly stated, including reasons and recommendations, by the implementing agencies. After all, if the problems are not highlighted, they will remain and persist for all of Africa to perceive and feel in reality.

One of such areas which the Working Group has not dwelt upon, and which we consider crucial, is the security or conflict aspect, that is, the ultimate manifestation of all the underlying causes, be they economic or social in origin. This political aspect deserves serious consideration, which the Working Group can undertake alone, or in concert with the Security Council, in our future session. Africa is a large continent and its problems should be of serious concern not only to the African governments and peoples but also to the international community, at least to three of the developed and powerful member States of the Security Council, with which Africa has special historical or colonial relationship.

In the light of your reminder, Mr. Co-Chairman, that the solution to Africa's problems requires tripartite action by the African governments, the UN system and the international community, we must acknowledge the role of the EU in the recent Cairo

Africa-EU Summit just alluded to by the distinguished representative of Portugal, who had the floor before us. We also share the EU's view that Africa's problems deserve a holistic approach. In this context, the Algiers Summit declaration by African leaders not to honour any African leader who assumes leadership through coup d'etat as from the year 2000 deserves noting. Equally note worthy is the recent Abuja African Summit on Roll Back Malaria, involving the WHO and World Bank, towards the promotion of health of Africans, without which both production and productivity in Africa will suffer from more draw-backs with worse consequence for overall economic growth and development.

Mr. Co-Chairman,

In ending these preliminary remarks, the Group of 77 and China would like to underscore two more of the key issues which the Report of the Working Group needs to emphasize as areas of critical needs for Africa. First, diversification of the economies. One of the main reasons why African countries have not been able to enter into and compete in the global economy is the lack of diversification of their respective economies. Many, if not all, need international assistance to achieve such diversification. Next is the issue of external debt burden and its incapacitation of national efforts at development of human capital and infrastructure. Both in its original and enhanced forms, the HIPC initiative has not adequately addressed the need for debt reduction. While current efforts are geared towards the heavily indebted and poor countries the aspect of those countries which are not heavily indebted but poor needs international consideration and assistance to resolve and should be highlighted in the report. Again, these are part of our preliminary remarks for evaluation of the briefing we have received, as we look forward to more value-added work of our third session in July.

I thank you.