



**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR STAFFORD NEIL, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHAIRMAN OF THE GROUP OF 77, ON AFRICA DAY 2005 (New York, 25 May 2005)**

Mr Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, it gives me great pleasure to be able to participate in the commemoration of the 42nd Anniversary of Africa Day. This Day highlights the achievements made by the African Continent since the creation of the Organisation of African Unity in 1963 and the subsequent launch of the African Union which has fostered a sense of partnership among Africa's diverse countries and peoples.

Today's commemoration, stands as a timely reminder of African leaders' commitment to the struggle for peace, freedom and economic development in Africa. Their efforts should be fully supported by the wider international community. Past injustices resulting from racism and exploitation have severely hampered Africa's growth and development and much will have to be done to remove the negative consequences of that legacy. We all have a collective responsibility to support Africa, a continent rich in human and natural resources, in efforts to realize its full potential. I therefore wish to draw attention to several issues to be tackled in order to address the immediate needs of Africa.

Mr Chairman,

First, resources are needed to give concrete expression to the spirit of true partnership for developing the African Continent. There are severe problems associated with unresolved conflicts, the ravages of the HIV pandemic and the economic challenges of globalization which can be overcome through a collective effort in support of internal stabilization and a commitment for delivery of resources from the donor community.

The Millennium Project Report released earlier this year correctly points to the need for increased resources if Africa, in particular Sub-Saharan Africa, in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Progress in the implementation of the NEPAD, especially in the priority areas of agriculture, infrastructure, environment and health - key areas in reducing poverty, promoting social stability and improving the quality of life, continue to suffer from the lack of adequate resources and investments in capacity-building. International cooperation, especially through the full implementation by developed partners of the 0.7 per cent target of GNI for ODA, therefore remains an imperative.

Second, urgent attention must be paid to removing the systemic inequities constraining the development of Africa. This requires more equitable rules in trade, aid and debt relief so that African countries can become net beneficiaries of global economic prosperity. For too long, Africa has been marginalized from trade at the global level and has been constrained by the burden of debt.

The reliance of African countries on commodities and their volatile market conditions is still a significant problem. This is reflected in its reduced share of world trade from 6 per cent in 1980 to 2 per cent in 2002. We should not allow such conditions to persist. Special attention must be paid to commodity price stabilization.

We must intensify our efforts, individually and collectively, to find practical solutions to these problems including through comprehensive debt relief packages for African countries, a doubling of development assistance and through reforming the multilateral trading system based on clearly defined development priorities with concrete political and financial commitments for achieving them. We look to the High Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly later this year to provide real guidance in this respect.

Mr Chairman,

Third, in this age of globalization, competitiveness and efficiency are of paramount importance in building productive capacity. There is obviously a need to ensure that African entrepreneurship and indigenous capability are encouraged and developed to take advantage of economic opportunities in the global system. However, the international community should be careful to avoid the imposition on Africa of economic models, development strategies and policy conditionalities. Assistance to the Continent should be provided in a way which is tailored to

African needs and the African cultural environment.

In concluding, Mr Chairman, it is the hope of the G77 and China that we will continue to work together to make this the beginning of a brighter future for the African Continent. We stand ready to play our part in this process and encourage the rest of the international community to do the same.

I thank you.

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