

**African Group Statement – Panel on the 30th Anniversary of the Declaration on the Right to Development**

 **15 June 2016**

Mr. President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group.

We thank the panelists for their insightful presentations.

The African Group joins the international community in celebrating the 30th Anniversary of this praiseworthy Declaration. We celebrate this anniversary with mixed emotions, but also with hopeful hearts. The concept of the right to development is perceived to be originally African, as it was first stated as such by Doudou Thiam, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Senegal, in Algiers in 1967. The then Minister referred to the right to development as a right that must be proclaimed “loud and clear for the Nations of the Third World”. Today, we proclaim this right “loud and clear”.

Mr. President,

Long before the adoption of the Declaration by the UNGA in 1986, the issue of development was already high on the Agenda of the African Continent and is contained in Article 22 of The African Charter of Human and Peoples’ Rights. Today, we want to take the opportunity to dispel the notion that African States do not want to take responsibility for their own development needs. We fully acknowledge that the primary responsibility for the realization of the right to development of our people rests with us.

For African States the right to development is an inalienable human right and we stand firm in the belief that the status of this right must be bestowed with the recognition it deserves which is more than that of a mere political aspiration. Human rights are universal, thus the right to development belongs to all Peoples all alike. A lot of criticism against the right to development leans towards the duties of States at national level versus that of the international community. We concede that long-term progress towards the implementation of the right to development requires effective development policies at the national level, but maintain that equitable economic relations and a favorable economic environment at the international level is vital in this regard.

As African States, we acknowledge that development facilitates the enjoyment of all human rights and the lack of development may not be invoked to justify the abridgement of internationally recognized human rights. We are fully cognizant of the duty to cooperate with each other in ensuring development and eliminating obstacles to development. However, the international community should equally acknowledge its duty to promote an effective international cooperation for the realization of the right to development and to work constructively towards the elimination of obstacles to development.

Mr. President,

We have opportunities to collaborate with each other to make this right a reality for the developing world, especially the least developed states, thus we call upon the international community to not allow these opportunities to pass without meaningful progress.

I thank you.