

STATEMENT BY  
**HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO, GCFR**  
President, Federal Republic of Nigeria  
Chairman, the African Union  
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**PROTOCOL**

I am delighted to be at this second important meeting of countries of the South, where opportunities and challenges in pursuit of South-South cooperation are to be further examined. I would, however, wish to begin by congratulating His Royal Highness, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, for rolling out the best in facilities and hospitality for the Summit. We truly appreciate them.

I also wish to congratulate Mr. Percival James Patterson, the Prime Minister of Jamaica for his able leadership of the Group of 77 and China. I am confident that under your able leadership, countries of the South would be able to put development at the top of the global agenda this momentous year.

When we met in Havana five years ago at the First South Summit, we had barely entered the New Millennium with all the hopes, expectations and apprehensions that came with it. On that occasion, we expressed the firm conviction that it was imperative for the South to reflect on the rapidly changing economic situation of the world and to find ways to address emerging challenges. We adopted the Havana Programme of Action, as the roadmap towards achieving our objectives.

It is a matter of great concern that five years after, we have achieved less than five per cent in the implementation of the Havana Programme of Action. This second meeting is therefore an opportunity for us to take stock of our progress, identify obstacles and challenges that impede our effectiveness, and consider the policy options that will enable us to advance rapidly with implementation.

If we fail to deliver on promises made to ourselves, we lack the moral justification to hold our development partners accountable for failure to deliver on promises made to complement our efforts. One cannot overstate the need and necessity to give weight and meaning to our own words. This is the only way to demonstrate genuine commitment and we must therefore urgently move from rhetoric to practical action by implementing the various programmes and initiatives that we have designed.

I would like to report on some specific measures that Nigeria has taken pursuant to the Havana Programme of Action. We have signed on to the Special Programme on Food Security of the Food and Agriculture Organization. Under this programme, referred to, as the National Special Programme on Food Security, we have established a US \$45 million Unilateral Trust Fund jointly managed with the FAO, to promote agricultural productivity, increase farmers' output by assisting them to realize their full potentials and create a sustainable source of income generation in Nigeria.

**The National Special Food Security Programme initially operated from 109 sites across the 36 States of the Federation. This number has now been expanded to 327 sites at a cost of US \$256 million. Government provides farming communities with infrastructure for integrated water resource management, improved seeds and seedlings, adequate agro inputs and relevant information on agricultural techniques. Special attention is being given to some selected commodities such as cassava, rice, vegetable oil, tree crops, livestock, fisheries and aquaculture. Our goal is not only to empower our farmers to meet their basic food needs, but also to create an avenue for them to earn decent income from their activities.**

**We have, in addition, signed a US \$22 million South-South Cooperation Agreement with the Government of the Peoples Republic of China. Pursuant to this agreement, 520 Chinese experts and technicians are providing technical assistance to Nigeria in water control, micro-projects in aquaculture and integrated rice-fish culture among other activities. Nigeria believes that the fight against widespread poverty must begin with the elimination of hunger.**

**Another area worthy of mention is the South-South Healthcare Delivery Programme. This Programme, with its Headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria, is currently being supported by Cuba, Libya, Algeria, South Africa, Botswana and Nigeria. It provides qualitative healthcare services to countries on request. Beneficiaries include Benin Republic, Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger Republic, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Gambia and Mali.**

**Health personnel from Cuba, Nigeria and Libya have been deployed to these countries, where they have carried out services in the areas of diagnosis, vaccination, radiology, training and research. There are requests from a number of countries that are undergoing finalization processes to pave way for the extension of healthcare delivery services under this Programme.**

**Considering its success, I would invite this Summit to approve its expansion both in terms of its donor and recipient base. With regard to the donor base, I would like to call on countries that have made pledges to the Programme, to follow-through on their commitments, while inviting countries that are in a position to do so, to provide assistance, to strengthen the Programme and its Secretariat in order to foster greater and better service delivery.**

**At the eleventh session of the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee of developing countries held in Havana Cuba, the delegation of Nigeria drew attention to the programme of the Action Committee on Raw Materials. The Committee was established in 1989 with the objective of strengthening cooperation among countries of the South in developing capacity for added value to their raw materials. Appropriate actions and strategies are being formulated to accelerate the value-added transformation of these raw materials. In pursuance of this objective, a meeting of the Action Committee would be convened soon in Nigeria at a date to be notified through the Office of the Chairman of G77 in New York.**

**As was the case in 2000, we are once again, meeting in the backdrop of robust preparations for the review of the Millennium Summit. This time, developing countries**

have to respond to new challenges that were either latent or localized in 2000. This Summit must therefore, pronounce itself unequivocally on the issue of development, peace and security. We can neither deny nor shrink from responding to all threats and challenges to international peace and security. In Nigeria's view, underdevelopment by its very nature constitutes the gravest threat to peace and security. The dignity of man, the freedom to make choices and the ability to decide on a way of life unencumbered by fear or want are the defining standards of development. These are inalienable rights that must be pursued with conviction, commitment and vigour.

The debt overhang is a direct challenge to peace, stability, harmony, growth and development. I am pleased to note the recent debt relief granted to some HIPC countries a few days ago for which we are most thankful. However, this is a good beginning. The momentum must not be squandered and the goodwill must not be allowed to wane. Countries granted debt relief are already badly dislocated, disjointed, and overwhelmed by the challenges of underdevelopment that they still require a programmed life line to get out of the abyss. The developed countries must continue to treat us with humane consideration and totally remove the yoke that hinders our ability to use our own resources to promote growth and development.

We are partners in progress and an unstable, crisis-ridden, backward, underdeveloped, and poverty-stricken developing world is a security threat and a moral albatross to the developed nations. Let us not mince words about this issue, debt relief is critical to economic recovery, political stability, democratic consolidation, and global peace and partnership. It is in the best interest of the human race no matter where they are located on the globe.

Nigeria does not believe however, that it is possible to achieve peace in a world where one third of its members live on incomes that cannot meet half of the basic human needs especially food, safe drinking water, sanitation and adequate shelter. A world such as ours, full of inequities and inequality, accentuated by the forces of globalization, seats precariously on a smoldering time bomb. This is an unacceptable world that we, collectively, must pool our efforts, to transform without further delay. To this end, we should send a united and firm message to the September Summit, declaring development as the foremost challenge facing the international community and that should be given primacy on the global agenda.

We should support the depth and visibility given to development by the Millennium Project, notwithstanding its shortcomings. But, we must also not fail in our message, to recognize the variety of threats to peace and security and the need to confront them. Africa, more than any other region of the world, dramatizes the complex and desperate challenges of development. Ironically, it also demonstrates in very vivid way the courage and resilience of peoples, the boundless opportunities for progress, and the value of collective action. Since our last Summit, the continent has adopted a home-grown development framework, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

More than a vision, NEPAD represents Africa's creed of faith and solemn covenant to itself, to involve its entire people in resource mobilization, utilization and governance to ensure a qualitative life free from fear and want. It is imperative therefore, that developing

**countries contribute meaningfully to the implementation of NEPAD. Success in this regard would usher new hope in the efficacy of south-south cooperation. Moreover, I would like to see greater commitment and engagement by developing countries in the establishment of partnerships, trade, resource flows, technology development cooperation and capacity building activities in Africa. In this connection, I would like to commend the Government of Indonesia for hosting the recent Asia-Africa Summit, which resulted in the adoption of the new Asia-Africa Strategic Partnership. I believe that it was a good beginning for promoting mutually rewarding cooperation. At the very least, we are going beyond words and fanciful declarations.**

**It would be remiss not to mention the forthcoming second phase of the World Summit on Information Society billed for Tunisia later in the year. Developing countries owe it a duty to participate effectively and in large numbers at the Summit.**

**We must take the initiative to redress the imbalances in the field of information communications technology since we are convinced that developed countries would not narrow the digital divide as a benevolent act to developing countries. Technology and information have become ways of defining power and opportunity in today's world and we must do everything possible to not just bridge the gap but also to surpass it. Some developing countries have shown that this is indeed possible. In this regard, I implore you to contribute generously to the Digital Solidarity Fund.**

**We all recognise that we face an uphill battle in our negotiation of the Doha Development Agenda of the World Trade Organization. Developing countries must press for an early conclusion of the negotiation, and in particular, use the occasion of the forthcoming Hong Kong Conference of Trade Ministers, to underscore the need to make trade an engine of development for developing countries. We must take a clear stand on the fact that obstructions to trade constitute direct obstacles to development, poverty reduction and peace.**

**I would like to end my remarks by calling for the strengthening of our institutions. The Secretariat of the G-77 as well as the South Center should be adequately funded to position them as our power houses for service delivery, knowledge and information, professionalism and excellence.**

**I thank you very much for your attention.**