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REPORT OF HER EXCELLENCY MRS. ELLEN JOHNSON-SIRLEAF
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA AND CHAIRPERSON
OF THE AFRICAN UNION HIGH LEVEL COMMITTEE
ON THE POST 2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

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I. Background

1. The 22nd Ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on January 30-31, 2014, adopted the Common African Position (CAP) on the Post 2015 Development Agenda (Assembly/AU/Dec.503 (XXII)). The Assembly mandated the High Level Committee (HLC), supported by African Union Commission (AUC) in collaboration with Member States, to engage in the negotiation process with the rest of the world, build regional and inter-continental alliances on the priority areas articulated in the Common African Position and ensure that Africa priorities are integrated into the post-2015 development agenda and related processes.

2. The Twenty-Fourth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of African Union, held in Addis Ababa from 30 - 31 January, 2015 took note of developments regarding the effort to integrate Africa's priorities into the Post-2015 Development Agenda being formulated by the global community. In particular, the Chair's Report to the Assembly underscored that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2014, had incorporated a substantial number of the priorities outlined in the CAP. The Report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWGSDG), which contains 17 goals and 169 targets, would constitute the main basis for integrating the SDGs into the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

3. Against this backdrop, the Twenty-Fourth Assembly adopted recommendations presented by the High Level Committee pertaining to the structure and Terms of Reference that would frame the participation of the African Group of Negotiators in the intergovernmental negotiations on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. It also mandated the African Group in New York to undertake appropriate measures to promote Africa's priorities in the negotiations. The Assembly further welcomed the decision taken by the UN General Assembly that the SDGs would constitute the main basis of the intergovernmental negotiations.

4. Noting the importance of preparing Africa's engagement in the upcoming Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD), the Assembly also underscored the need to ensure that the continent's priorities are reflected in the final outcomes of the Conference.

5. This report to the Twenty-Fifth Assembly therefore focuses on the implementation of the aforementioned decisions and key issues which have evolved in the intergovernmental negotiations so far.

II. Progress and establishment of the Bureau of African Group of Negotiators (AGN)

Formation of the Bureau of the African Group of Negotiators

6. The Bureau currently comprises the following members:

West Africa	- Liberia	- Chair of the Bureau
East Africa	- Tanzania	- Chief Negotiator
Southern Africa	- Zimbabwe	- Member
North Africa	- Tunisia	- Member
Central Africa	- Chad	- Member
Expert Level Committee Experts	- Nigeria	- Coordinating Negotiator, 2nd

7. Strict compliance with the Terms of Reference as adopted by the AU Summit of January 2015 proved difficult, especially the requirement for regional balance. The positions of Lead Coordinators and Co-Lead Coordinators were filled, based upon the availability and expertise of experts in the various thematic areas, as follows:

A) Lead Coordinator on Declaration	Algeria
B) Co-Lead Coordinator on Declaration	Nigeria
C) Lead Coordinator on SDGs, Targets, and Indicators	Cameroun
D) Co-Lead Coordinator on SDGs, Targets, and Indicators	Morocco
E) Lead Coordinator on Means of Implementation and Global Partnership	Chad
F) Co-Lead Coordinator on Means of Implementation and Global Partnership	Sudan
G) Lead Coordinator on Follow-up and Review	Egypt
H) Co-Lead Coordinator on Follow-up and Review	Cameroun
I) Lead Coordinator on Financing for Development	Chad
J) Co-Lead Coordinator on Financing for Development	Rwanda

III. Support to the African Negotiators

A. HLC-New York Coordination activities

8. The HLC in New York (HLC-NY) is tasked with the responsibility to ensure that the priority areas identified in the CAP are articulated by the African Group and integrated into the Post 2015 Development Agenda and the outcome of the FfD. Pending the establishment of the negotiation structure as mandated by the AU Assembly, the HLC-NY served as a coordination mechanism for ensuring coherence in promotion of the CAP in the negotiation process. Several strategy meetings of the HLC-NY were held and issues arising were subsequently brought forward as agenda items for discussion and endorsement by the plenary of the African Group.

9. The Chair and Ambassadors of HLC-NY along with the Sherpa of the Chairperson of the HLC met in New York on 18 February 2015 to discuss and share complementary thoughts on formulating strategies to strengthen the efforts of the AGN in the ongoing Post 2015 intergovernmental negotiations. Based on the decision of the 24th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly, the meeting highlighted the need for the AGN to seek support and technical assistance, in particular, from AUC, the NEPAD Agency, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), African Development Bank (AfDB) and United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) in order to advance Africa's positions in the negotiations.

10. Since the initiation of negotiations, the HLC-NY has been instrumental in coordinating activities of the African Group related to the post-2015 agenda, in collaboration with the AU Permanent Observer Mission to promote information sharing and interaction between Permanent Representatives and African 2nd Committee experts who are on the frontline of the negotiations. A pattern was established of holding focused meetings before and after each negotiation session in order to clarify the African position on issues, conduct post mortem on achievements and constraints and chart the way forward.

11. The HLC-NY arranged briefings by Mrs. Amina Mohammed, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Post-2015 Development Planning and Mr. Macharia Kamau, Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations and Co-Facilitator of the intergovernmental process on the Post-2015 Development Agenda at some of these meetings, which served to enrich discussions. The contribution of South Africa to the negotiation process, as Chair of the G77+China, is also appreciated.

12. On March 9 2015, the African Group was visited by the Chairperson of the HLC, H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf at the premises of the AU Permanent Observer Mission in New York. The Chairperson received a briefing on the status of the negotiations. In response, she extended appreciation to all the African countries for their contribution to and solidarity with the three West African countries most affected by the Ebola virus. She encouraged the Group to continue to speak with one voice and act

with common purpose towards the objective of integrating Africa's priorities into the new post-2015 global agenda. In reference to development financing, President Sirleaf underscored that, while ODA remains important, other conditions such as fair opportunities and better environment for trade, improved infrastructure and prudent use of resources, are also critical to Africa's ability to implement the SDGs.

B. Technical support to the AGN

13. In implementation of the decision of the Assembly regarding support to the negotiation team, the Chair of the HLC requested the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to provide technical support to the AGN team. The Executive Secretary responded by deploying a senior expert of the Commission to New York in March 2015 for an initial three-month period. The AGN continues to benefit from the analyses and technical advice of this senior expert who has provided substantive inputs towards refining the views of the negotiators on various aspects of the negotiations.

14. The AUC continues to provide strategic advice and technical support to the AGN through its Permanent Observer Mission in New York. The AUC coordinated and facilitated the participation and engagement of Experts from AGN in AU meetings. This included the 8th Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 25 to 31 March, 2015. During this meeting, experts from AGN presented the African Group's perspective on the Third International Conference on Financing for Development which is to be held from July 13-16, 2015 in Addis Ababa.

15. With regard to the development of indicators, the 46th session of the United Nations Statistics Commission (UNSC) held in March 2015 endorsed the roadmap for the development and implementation of an indicator framework and the suggested timetable for adoption of indicators at its 47th session in February/March 2016. A baseline for sustainable development goals for global monitoring will provide baseline data requirements including the identification of gaps. A requisite scaling-up of measurement at the national, regional and global level to monitor the goals and targets of the post-2015 development agenda will follow in the ensuing period of 2016-2020.

16. An implementation plan for this outcome consists of the formation of a country led inter-agency and expert group on SDG indicators (IAEG-SDG) to develop this indicator framework and populate it with an appropriate list of indicators for the monitoring of the SDGs. This effort will take into account existing efforts by different groups in countries and this includes regional and international agencies, regional commissions, academia, civil society and other relevant international organizations. A country-led High level Group (HLG) was also established to provide leadership for the SDG implementation process and address the need for funding statistical capacity-building. In the process of developing indicators, Africa will be represented by 7 countries in the IAEG-SDG and up to 4 countries at the HLG.

17. In response to the urgent task of continued discourse with the Open Working Group on Indicators for SDGs and to sustain its contribution to the process, Africa hosted a series of sessions subsequent to the 46th Session of the United Nations Statistics Commission. The first meeting was held in South Africa from 22-25 April. This was followed by a consultative meeting that was held in Algiers, Algeria, from 5-8 May 2015, to review and discuss the proposed list of SDGs indicators. The meeting reviewed the Terms of Reference of the two groups (IAEG-SDG and HLG) and adopted the proposed list of members for the two groups. The AGN experts participated in the technical meeting and shared their views. The outcome of the meeting will be used to articulate Africa's position on issues related to the development of indicators for the Post-2015 agenda.

18. A critical outcome of the Algiers meeting was the decision to cost the SDG indicators. The meeting was held in Pretoria South Africa from 25-30 May 2015. The costing of the SDGs is based on the Strategy for Harmonization of Statistics in Africa (SHaSA) and Africa Agenda 2063 in preparation for the Financing for Development (FfD) summit that will be held in July, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting emerged with a report with costed SHaSA. Africa has made its mark by committing to the Strategy for the Harmonisation of Statistics in Africa. This strategy is aligned with agenda 2063, Common Africa Position (CAP), and SDGs. The productions of indicators have been costed and a work programme will be reviewed annually at the African Symposia for Statistics Development (ASSD) and the Committee of Directors General of National Statistics Offices (CoDGs).

19. As part of its contribution to the AGN, the NEPAD Agency organized several activities, in collaboration with the Permanent Observer Mission of AU to the UN and other institutions, on themes relating to the Post 2015 Development Agenda and FfD from Africa's perspective. The three notable briefing, working session, and side-event were held on 26 February 2015, 7 April 2015 and 18 May 2015 covering the themes: "The Addis 2015 Cycle: Discussing the Capital Markets in Africa and Investment in the SDGs," "Means of Implementation for the SDGs and Financing for Development for July 2015 Addis Conference", and "Regional and National Follow-up and Review Mechanisms: opportunities and challenges for the Post 2015 Development Agenda in Africa", respectively. These interactive events helped to reinforce the understanding of the African Group 2nd Committee Experts but also the broader international community on major issues underpinning the negotiations.

20. Anticipating the need for a better coordination among African stakeholders involved in the intergovernmental negotiation, the NEPAD Agency assigned a Senior Programme Officer since October 2014 to provide advocacy and technical assistance to the African Group 2nd Committee Experts and the AGN. The African Group and AGN have continued to benefit from the strategic assistance provided by the expert from the NEPAD Agency.

21. During the course of the negotiations, the UNFPA, in collaboration with the AUC, organized a one-day workshop on 9 March 2015 in New York on the theme “Post 2015 goals, targets and indicators critical for Africa’s Development”. At this workshop, the Group held interactive dialogue around briefing provided by Ambassador Macharia Kamau on issues underpinning the third intergovernmental negotiations. At the same workshop, the Director General of Statistics of South Africa shared information on the importance of statistics for framing of indicators for the SDGs as well as the need to strengthen the capacity and engagement of national statistics offices in Africa. He further made a presentation on the implications of the demographic dividend for Africa.

IV. Summary of African Group positions, Post 2015 intergovernmental sessions and the preparatory process for the Third International Conference on the Financing for Development (FfD)

A. African Group positions

22. The African Group remains actively engaged in the Post 2015 intergovernmental negotiations and is strongly articulating its positions on various issues. The Group is a strong member within the G77+China negotiating bloc and its presence is being felt. Overall, there is receptivity within this negotiating bloc to the concerns and priorities of Africa.

23. **On the “Declaration” of the Post 2015 Development Agenda:** The Africa Group emphasized, among many issues, that the document should clearly reiterate the need to: incorporate the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR); respect the policy space of developing countries; carry forward the unfinished business of the MDGs into the new global development agenda; underscore poverty eradication as the central objective of the Post 2015 Agenda, urge development partners to fulfil their ODA commitment and reaffirm the inextricable links that connect peace, security and development.

24. **On the Sustainable Development Goals, targets, and indicators:** The African Group stood firm in its position that the Report of the OWGSDGs should not be reopened. The Group therefore opposed suggestions for “technical proofing of the targets” and “re-arranging, clustering, and re-packaging of the SDGs” which were put forward by other regional groupings and member states due to the perceived risks of reopening the Report. The Group emphasized that the development and application of indicators at national level should be the sole obligation of member states’ statistical offices based upon their national circumstances. Regional indicators would fall within the purview of regional entities. The Group also emphasized the need to strengthen the capacity of national statistical offices of developing countries, in particular African countries.

25. **On the issue of Means of Implementation (MOI) and Global Partnership:** The African Group supported the need for expeditious operationalization of the technology bank for the LDCs and creation of the technology facilitation mechanism dedicated to

developing countries by 2017. The view that the MOI and FfD should proceed on separate tracks was strongly supported by G77+China, including Africa on grounds that the FfD draft outcome did not rise to the level of ambition of the SDGs/MOI and that its scope goes beyond the SDGs.

26. On the Follow-up and Review Mechanism: During this session, the African Group along with other regional groupings agreed on the following themes for the six interactive dialogues to take place during the September 2015 UN Summit on the adoption of the Post 2015 Development Agenda:

- i) Ending poverty and hunger;
- ii) Tackling inequalities, empowering women and girls, and leaving no one behind;
- iii) Fostering sustainable economic growth, transformation and promoting sustainable consumption and production;
- iv) Protecting our planet and combating climate change;
- v) Building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions to achieve sustainable development;
- vi) Delivering on a revitalized global partnership.

B. The Post 2015 Intergovernmental Sessions

27. The framework for negotiations on the Post 2015 Development Agenda, as agreed by the UN General Assembly resolution (A/69/L.49), provided for eight intergovernmental negotiation sessions. Those eight sessions are centred on the following themes and timelines:

	Intergovernmental Sessions	Dates convened	Focus of the session
1.	Stocktaking	19-21 January 2015	The session took stock of the principles agreed and processes which led to the adoption of the OWG Report containing the proposed SDGs and targets.
2.	Declaration	17-20 February 2015	The session deliberated the elements that will be assembled to constitute the Declaration which will be adopted and signed at the Summit of the General Assembly in September 2015.

	Intergovernmental Sessions	Dates convened	Focus of the session
3.	Sustainable Development Goals, Targets and Indicators	23-27 March 2015	As Member states had already agreed not to reopen the SDGs, the deliberation focused on the process of formulating global indicators by the UN Statistical Commission and the need for participation and capacity building of national statistical offices.
4.	Means of Implementation and Global Partnership	21-24 April 2015	The session discussed the various elements needed to finance and implement the Post 2015 Development Agenda as contained in SDG 17 and the relationship with FfD process.
5.	Follow-up and Review Mechanism	18-22 May 2015	The session deliberated the need for follow-up and review mechanisms at the three levels (national, regional and global), with emphasis on the global level and also the efficacy of having one overarching mechanism or separate mechanisms for the P2015 and FfD processes.
6.	Intergovernmental negotiations on the outcome document	22-25 June 2015	To be convened.
7.	Intergovernmental negotiations on the outcome document	20-24 July & 27-31 July 2015	To be convened.

C. The Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD)

28. Consistent with the UN General Assembly resolution 68/279, the zero draft of the FfD is being revised in a series of drafting sessions involving member states and regional groupings in order to reach consensus on a text to be submitted to the Addis Ababa Conference in July 2015. In this context, the African Group of Negotiators, based upon the recommendations contained in the Group's perspective document on the FfD endorsed by the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development held from 30 to 31 March 2015 in Addis Ababa, continued its strong advocacy for these measures:

- Support to implement the African Union Agenda 2063 including its continental programmes embedded in NEPAD; establishment of a new

platform to bridge the infrastructure gap and the doubling of annual investment for sustainable infrastructure in developing countries from all sources; reaffirmation that every state has and shall freely exercise full permanent sovereignty over all its wealth, natural resources and economic activity; promotion of investment in value addition and processing of natural resources; and strengthening the capacity for better contract negotiations;

- Allocation by developed countries of 0.2-0.25% of GNI as ODA to LDCs by 2020, instead of 0.15-0.2% of ODA; establishment and operationalization of an international investments support centre dedicated to LDCs; cancelation of all debts of the countries affected by the Ebola crisis in West Africa; reduction of the transaction costs of migrants remittances to less than 3 per cent of the amount transferred by 2030, and elimination of remittance corridor;
- Conclusion of negotiations on the Doha Development Agenda and full implementation by Members of the WTO of duty-free and quota-free market access for products originating from all the LDCs;
- Adoption of measures by the relevant regulatory bodies to reduce excess volatility in food commodity and derivative markets and facilitate timely access to market information;
- Enhancement of capacity building support to developing countries, in particular to national statistical authorities and bureau, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable disaggregated data;
- Upgrading the UN Committee of Experts on International Tax Cooperation in Tax Matters to the status of an intergovernmental body with the perspective of minimizing tax loopholes and increasing domestic revenues;

D. Modalities for negotiation for the FfD

29. In preparing the final outcome document for the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, the UN General Assembly resolution provided for three drafting sessions. However, due to the complexity of the issues to be deliberated and diversity of views; additional inter-sessions for consultations were scheduled. The timelines for the drafting sessions and inter-sessional consultations are as follow:

No.	Sessions	Dates convened	Focus of the Session
1.	First Drafting session	27-29 January 2015	The session deliberated upon the zero draft of the FfD produced by the Co-facilitators
2.	Second Drafting Session	13-17 April 2015	The session discussed the revised draft and member states provided further inputs into the revised draft of the FfD.

No.	Sessions	Dates convened	Focus of the Session
3.	First intersessional consultation	12-15 May 2015	The session deliberated the compiled report of the co-facilitators and member states provided additional inputs into the document.
4.	Second intersessional consultation	26-29 may 2015	The session discussed the outstanding paragraphs of the FfD in order to reach consensus and way forward.
5.	Third intersessional consultation	1-5 June 2015	Discussions are currently ongoing among member states on outstanding issues and paragraphs of the document.
6.	Third (Final) Drafting Session	15-19 June 2015	To be convened.

V. Areas of divergence and convergence in the negotiations.

A. Areas of divergence

30. During the course of the Post 2015 intergovernmental sessions, many contentious issues have emerged that are yet to be resolved among member states. They include the following:

- i) The reference to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, the right to development, and respecting the policy space of developing countries were advanced by developing countries to serve as foundational issues underpinning the global agenda. However, developed partners offered counter proposals to these issues;
- ii) The proposal by developed countries to call upon upper middle income countries for commitments. To counter balance, the developing countries insist on fulfilment by developed countries of ODA commitments by 2020; recovery and return of tax evasion and avoidance assets to countries of origin; deletion of references to women inheritance rights; operationalization of the technology facilitation mechanism; reform in voting shares and representation in both the IMF and the World Bank;
- iii) The relationship between FfD and the SDGs/MOI: While all member states acknowledge that both tracks are obviously complementary processes, there is opposition to the suggestion of development partners that FfD should replace the MOI of the SDGs. The G77+China, including Africa, has maintained that the two processes should proceed on separate tracks. The FfD would suffice for the MOI of the SDGs only if it incorporates all elements of the MOI-specific targets. The FfD Conference should focus on

how the international community finances the ambitious Post 2015 Development Agenda;

- iv) Establishing joint or separate Follow-up and Review mechanisms: The High Level Political Forum (HLPF) was established to serve as a follow-up and review mechanism for the SDGs. No such mechanism was foreseen for the FfD. Two divergent views have emerged on the question of having a common review framework or separate follow-up and review mechanisms for the two processes. The development partners prefer a single overarching follow-up and review mechanism. The G77+China including Africa, however, insists on the establishment of a separate intergovernmental follow-up mechanism for the FfD so as not to overburden the HLPF.

B. Areas of convergence

31. Despite the divergence on some issues, negotiators are of one accord in acknowledging that the success of the Post 2015 Development Agenda will hinge on indomitable political will of governments, effective policies, strong institutions, unwavering commitments and a renewed global partnership.

32. In general, member states reached consensus that the final outcome of the FfD must match the ambitious, transformative, and universal nature of the Post 2015 Development Agenda. Delegates further agreed that FfD and the Post 2015 Development Agenda processes are complementary and synergetic but not subsidiary. The FfD draft outcome document is being revised through a series of drafting sessions and with Member States working on a compiled text. The final negotiations are scheduled to take place from 15-19 June 2015. The zero draft of the Post 2015 Development Agenda will be tabled in the 1st week of June 2015 for negotiations from 22-25 June 2015. It is anticipated that the divergence on the issue of incorporation or complementarity of the FfD to the Post 2015 Development Agenda may be resolved as the documents near finalization.

33. There appears to be consensus around the importance of prioritizing the needs of least developed countries, post conflict countries, and countries in difficult situations. This is consistent with the imperatives of completing the unfinished business of the MDGs, and “leaving no one behind”.

VI. Conclusion

34. The intergovernmental negotiations hold high potential to yield benefits for Africa in the Post 2015 Development Agenda and the FfD processes. The African Group aims to focus on consolidating the gains achieved so far and ensuring that Africa’s priorities for financing development are credibly reflected in the outcome document of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development to be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in July 2015.

35. To this end, it is important that Africa continues to position itself strategically throughout these negotiations so that it seizes all opportunities to reflect its development aspirations in the next global agenda. At the same time, acquiring the required means of implementation for African countries will go a long way in providing the impetus towards the successful implementation of the Post 2015 Development Agenda across the continent.

36. Against this backdrop, African Governments are strongly encouraged to participate at the highest political level in the Addis Ababa FfD Conference so as to deliberate and agree on a framework to finance the ambitious transformative and universal Post 2015 Development Agenda.

37. Given the critical importance of the development of the global indicators framework that will cascade down to countries in the development of national indicators, member states are strongly encouraged to ensure that their national statistics offices attend the meetings and engage in the work of the United Nations Statistical Commission, which is currently underway, of developing the global indicators framework.

2015

Report of Her Excellency Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf President of the Republic of Liberia and Chairperson of the African Union High Level Committee on the Post 2015 Development Agenda

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