



**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY
AMBASSADOR MOHAMED YOUSIF ABDELMANNAN, PERMANENT
MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE SUDAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS, ON
AGENDA ITEM 118: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 2008-2009,
UNDER THE SECTION RELATED TO THE STANDARDS OF
ACCOMMODATION FOR AIR TRAVEL IN THE UN SYSTEM, DURING THE
FIRST PART OF THE RESUMED 63RD SESSION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (New York, 9 March 2009)**

Mr Chairman,

1. I have the honor to speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on agenda item 118, Programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009, under the section related to the standards of accommodation for air travel in the UN system.
2. I would like to thank Ms. Nancy Hurtz-Soyka, Director of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management, for introducing the reports of the Secretary-General on standards of accommodation for air travel in the UN system. I would also like to thank Ms. Susan McLurg, Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for introducing the related ACABQ report.
3. The Group of 77 and China takes note of the Secretary-General's reports on standards of accommodation for air travel in the UN system (A/63/524, A/63/715).
4. The Group of 77 and China, agreeing with the need for discretion to the Secretary-General, also supports the ACABQ's view that every request for exception to the agreed class of travel must be carefully scrutinized in view of the increase in the number of exceptions for the period under review. In exercising discretion and exceptions the Secretary-General should establish clear criteria particularly for upgrading travel to first class for security officers.
5. The Group keenly awaits the comprehensive report on the harmonization of standards of travel for staff of the United Nations common system and supports the ACABQ's recommendation that the report should also take into account the recommendations of the audit review by the OIOS.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.