



STATEMENT BY MRS. JANICE MILLER, COUNSELLOR, PERMANENT MISSION OF JAMAICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON BEHALF OF THE G77 AND CHINA UNDER AGENDA ITEM 7 (h) OF THE SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL: AD HOC ADVISORY GROUPS ON AFRICAN COUNTRIES EMERGING FROM CONFLICT: AD HOC ADVISORY GROUP ON GUINEA-BISSAU (New York, 18 July 2005)

Mr. President,

The work of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau is evidence of the positive work that can be achieved with the active engagement of the international community. The G 77 and China recalls that the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau was the first such group established in response to the recommendation in 2002 for the establishment of an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict. Since that time, the Ad Hoc group Advisory Group has done useful work in keeping Guinea-Bissau on the international agenda, in promoting dialogue with the authorities in the country and undertaking collaborative work with international institutions. The promotion of a compact and a partnership between Guinea-Bissau and the international community has led to specific actions to improve economic and political governance in the country. Based on the report however, it is clear that Guinea Bissau is in urgent need of sustained assistance from the international and donor community to allow it to achieve its development goals.

The G77 and China congratulates Guinea-Bissau on the successful holding of the first round of Presidential elections on 19 June 2005. It is hoped that the second round to be held at the end of this month will be conducted peacefully. The G77 and China also wishes to commend those donors, including many from the developing world, for the generous contributions made towards stabilising the situation in Guinea-Bissau.

The crisis in Guinea-Bissau and the resulting adverse effects on its economic and social sectors have had negative impact on the country's development and put at risk the country's attainment of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015. It is evident from the report that the situation in the country remains fragile. The G77 and China remains optimistic that Guinea-Bissau is moving in the right direction but is concerned that such progress could be severely hampered by the continuing financial crisis. The Group therefore believes that more concrete initiatives are needed on the part of the international community to support the efforts of Guinea-Bissau to fully achieve peace and development. Continued action is also needed on the part of the major donors beyond the funding of elections. Given the vital necessity of budgetary support being provided to assist Guinea Bissau for the effective functioning of the State, the G77 and China calls for the full and early fulfilment of commitments made towards supporting Africa including those made at the recently held Gleneagles Summit. The Group also endorses the proposal by the Ad Hoc Advisory Group to expand the donor-base for Guinea-Bissau and supports the proposal for the Ad Hoc group to play an active role in promoting and planning for the Donor Roundtable.

The role played by African regional organizations in supporting Guinea-Bissau has been significant. Particular mention must be made in this regard of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) which was the largest donor to Guinea-Bissau in 2004. The Ad Hoc Advisory Group should, in the course of its activities explore, to the extent possible, ways to expand its contacts with sub regional groups in Africa so as to facilitate a more comprehensive approach to Guinea-Bissau.

The G77 and China notes that some of the recommendations previously proposed by the Ad Hoc Advisory Group are in the process of implementation. A number of these recommendations still remain to be implemented including the need for a comprehensive technical assistance plan for capacity-building. It is hoped that the partners will be encouraged to assist the Government of Guinea-Bissau to accomplish this task in the near future.

The Group believes that the UN system and donor countries should continue to support Guinea-Bissau in formulating a comprehensive diversification strategy so as to avoid continued dependence on one export crop which is highly susceptible to price fluctuations. Diversification will not only remove such dependence, thus improving the dependability and sustainability of the country's revenues, but would also reduce the country's dependence on ODA, contribute positively to sustainable development and be a vital contribution to strategies for peace-building. The UN System should also continue to work on the coordination of a humanitarian response mechanism.

The G77 and China endorses the importance of the reform of the security sector so as to improve political stability and increase the chances for investment and development. The Group therefore urges all of Guinea-Bissau's partners to provide assistance in the area of security sector reform.

In conclusion allow me to reiterate that the G77 and China continues to attach great importance to the work of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau. We are therefore in full support of the extension of its mandate.

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