



Mr. Moderator, President Gregory H. Williams, General Abubakar, distinguished participants in this Policy Roundtable: Good morning.

For reasons of history, culture, heritage and solidarity, I believe it important for a strong, mutually beneficial relationship to be maintained between the countries of the African continent and the African Diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbean.

I wish, therefore, to recognize the African Strategic and Peace Research Group (AFSTRAG) and The Institute for Research on the African Diasporas in the Americas and the Caribbean (IRADAC) for organizing this policy roundtable conference on " Africa's Security, Stability and Development", focused on the role and contribution that the African Diaspora and people of African descent can make. I thank them for their invitation to participate in the Conference.

Africa is a continent blessed with an abundance of human and natural resources. Yet, for many countries on the continent, the past decade has been one of exceptional challenge. I believe that it is fair to say that every broad struggle the United Nations is currently waging, whether to make and keep the peace or to promote better standards of living or to promote democracy and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms is Africa's struggle. It is a struggle that has left many African countries hard pressed to keep step in a rapidly changing global economic environment. An overwhelming debt burden, lack of access on fair terms to markets for exports, a desperate need for the technology required to compete, drought and desertification are, as you know, (b) (5) - (c) (1) - 11 (")& f)



and particularly through the United Nations system, by Heads of State and Government and other high-level government representatives from around the globe. Global leaders continued to express strong support for decisive action taken by the African Union (AU) as the foremost regional organization for managing integration and other processes in Africa.

The New Partnership for African Development, NEPAD, launched in 2001, received high praise as a framework designed by Africa, for Africa's development. NEPAD's systematic approach to mobilizing international assistance for Africa, and harmonizing efforts in this area, gives clear indication that Africa now owns its development strategies and priorities. The initiatives of the Office of the Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa, headed by Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari, to spearhead efforts to promote international support for NEPAD, and for Africa's development generally, is strongly supported by the international community; it certainly has my support.



I believe that the diaspora has a role to play in translating general proposals for Africa's development, stability and security into action, and in contributing to the implementing of that action. This would include support for NEPAD and other African development plans. The sector has a particular role to play, in promoting business and foreign direct investment.

In short, Africa has guardianship over its own future. The diaspora must be a willing partner with Africa in crafting relationships that are mutually beneficial and that would contribute to Africa initiatives for its security, stability and development.

I thank you.