

**2008 Substantive Session of the Economic and Social Council  
Operational Activities Segment  
10 July 2008 (Thursday)**

**Opening remarks by the Chair**

**H.E. Ambassador Andrei Dapkiunas, Vice-President of ECOSOC  
“The UN system in a changing aid environment: implications and comparative  
advantages”**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now, I am pleased to welcome you to the first thematic panel on “the UN system in a changing aid environment: implications and comparative advantages”. I would like to also warmly welcome our distinguished panelists of today and our moderator, Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, the Executive Secretary of ECA, and the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Today, the Council is holding an interactive panel discussion with the distinguished panelists who are experts on official development aid and the United Nations operational activities. This dialogue is very timely and vital to inform the forthcoming global processes of international development cooperation (such as the High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra and the Doha Review Conference on Financing for Development to be held later this year, of the vision and direction of the United Nations operational activities in achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. The four panel speakers represented today, namely, Uganda, Japan, UNFPA and UNDP, are a composition of a programme country, a donor country, and two United Nations organizations with significant level of expenditures in operational activities for development.

During the Development Cooperation Forum, we have heard about the numerous challenges such as spiraling food and energy prices, inflations, and impact of climate change, as well as new opportunities of development cooperation as a whole. Indeed,

international development cooperation has experienced drastic changes in recent years. Private philanthropy, global funds and South-South and triangular development cooperation has become more visible and important in terms of volume and scope. This has affected the role and relative importance of ODA itself as well as the position and contribution of the operational activities of the United Nations system. The principle of national ownership, simplification and harmonization of cooperation around a single nationally driven development process is now a well-established concept, which is also endorsed by TCPR 2007. In terms of channel, ODA tends to become slightly less multilateral. Nevertheless, the uniqueness of the UN system's operational activities for development is that the system combines its legitimate articulation and representation of global mandates with multi-disciplinary knowledge, skills and other resources.

These are just few examples that this panel discussions may provide us today, to simulate out thoughts. Our distinguished panelists can also bring into different perspectives the implications of new guidance emanating from TPCR 2007. During the past days, we have been exposed to a wide range of interesting discussions on making aid and development cooperation more relevant, coherent, effective and results-based. Today's dialogue will help us bring our attention back to "the role of UN operational activities" in achieving national development goals and MDGs.

May I now give the floor to the Moderator, Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, the Executive Secretary of ECA, and the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Thank you.