

**Statement delivered by Mr. Sha Zukang
Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs
United Nations**

**ECOSOC SPECIAL EVENT
HOW CORPORATE PHILANTHROPY CAN CONTRIBUTE TO ADVANCING
THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS, PARTICULARLY FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

(25 February 2008, ECOSOC chamber)

**Conversation 2: Leveraging leadership and strengthening partnerships through
positive dialogue (4:30-5:30 p.m.)**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to be part of this distinguished panel on leadership and partnerships. On behalf of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, a co-organizer of this special event, I would also like to take the opportunity to welcome all of you here, including our corporate guests.

My dear friends, you have already heard today that the private sector, and particularly philanthropic foundations, including corporate foundations, can play an important role in development assistance. As the Deputy Secretary General has already underscored, we cannot reach the MDGs by 2015 if we do not work together.

I know many of you are used to notion that the United Nations and the General Assembly are Government-centric bodies but I can tell you that, over the last decade, there has been a recognition and acceptance of the role that partnerships play in achieving internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. The private sector was specifically invited by the General Assembly to make contributions to the realization of the MDGs through financial resources, access to technology, management expertise and support to programmes. This resolution also welcomed innovative approaches to use

partnerships as a means to better implement goals and programmes, in particular in pursuit of development and the eradication of poverty.

In recent years, we have seen that the private sector has in fact become an important participant in many major summits and conferences, including those on Financing for Development, World Summit for Sustainable Development and World Summit on the Information Society. The Economic and Social Council has been a leader in this regard.

A key question is what are the *opportunities* and what are the *challenges* in such partnership?

The *opportunities* are created by an amazing growth in international giving combined with a new focus – both within the public and private-based development community – on financial sustainability and replicability, a growing use of the tools of competitiveness and efficiency of the market, innovation, and willingness to take risks. Both the rise in international giving by a diverse range of actors, including corporate foundations, and the use of these new approaches could indeed produce a sustainable development impact. My view is that this impact could be substantially greater if appropriate approaches and tools were found to give greater degree of coherence to the work of numerous and diverse actors involved, including the private sector and the philanthropic community.

The *challenge* is, of course, how do we work together effectively? Mr. Melkert has already addressed how this can be done on the ground – but how to ensure that our combined efforts fit within an “architecture” so that it is not done on an *ad hoc* and fragmented basis but is coherent? By “coherent” we mean development assistance that is guided by a shared set of development priorities that are owned by all stakeholders.

As you may know, some Governments have established channels and modalities for coordinating financial flows - such as OECD/DAC. Furthermore, this July ECOSOC will hold a first Development Cooperation Forum which will provide a broader, universal perspective by also addressing the contribution of donors who are not members of

OECD/DAC. This new Forum is expected to play an important role in promoting greater impact of international development cooperation pursued by multilateral institutions, as well as bilateral development agencies and South- South cooperation arrangements.

I see the value of the Development Cooperation Forum as a facilitator of the conversations between the public and private side of development cooperation in addressing the question of how Governments (if they choose to) encourage more private giving for development and how the specific approaches and actions of foundations can be consistent with long-term national development objectives. Both governments and foundations must be willing to bridge cultural and institutional differences in order to develop a long-term common agenda and the Council's Development Cooperation Forum can provide a venue and medium for this discussion.

Since the Forum is a new global platform for diverse development cooperation actors to engage in a dialogue on key policy issues affecting the quality and impact of aid, we would also want to engage you, our corporate guests and others in the philanthropic community who are bringing this new source of financing development, in the debate over the coherence of international development cooperation and aid effectiveness.

I believe that your presence here today indicates that there is an interest, and dare I say, commitment in working together in a partnership to advance the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and I am very encouraged by this.

Let me stress once again: the Council's role is to build effective bridges among the policy agendas of diverse development cooperation actors - multilateral institutions, traditional or non-traditional bilateral donors, as well as civil society organizations, including the private sector and foundations. We welcome your interest in contributing to the advancement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. It is around the corner. Let us work together.

Thank you, Mr. President.

