

UNITED NATIONS



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**Remarks by
Mr. Sha Zukang
Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs
at the Opening of the Development Cooperation Forum**

New York, 29 June 2010

Distinguished Ministers,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to address you at the opening of this second annual Development Cooperation Forum. We come together to exchange ideas and best practices on how we, the international community, can improve the impact of aid on development goals. As H.E. Mr Ali has said, with the global economic landscape so fragile and with the deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals drawing near, this work is more crucial than ever. I thank you for your attendance here and I count on your full and active participation in the next two days.

I am also pleased to introduce the report of the Secretary-General on trends and progress in international development cooperation. The report's scope is wide. It reviews commitments to aid quantity, progress on policy coherence, the impact of the recent global crises, aid allocation practices and mutual accountability mechanisms, among other topics. It consolidates the research, best practices and lessons learned from DCF meetings and symposia in the past 18 months - in Helsinki, Vienna and Bangkok. Your contributions over this time have been very welcome and useful and I thank you for the time and energy you have given to the Forum.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The report shows that despite the atmosphere of anxiety and austerity in the global economy, many donor countries have lived up to their promises. Indeed, development aid rose in 2009 and most donors are expected to meet 2010 aid targets.

It is heartening that some non-DAC countries are also playing a critical role in delivering support to some of the poorest countries. Many of these are developing countries who are aware of the challenges faced by their less fortunate friends and are helping out in a spirit of solidarity.

Another trend highlighted in the report points to increasing support from foundations, private charities and civil society organizations.

Despite these marked signs of progress, some donors are well short of global commitments and are struggling to meet voluntarily set targets. Many are likely to renege on pledges to Sub-Saharan Africa.

For these reasons we need to come together in an even more committed way. We cannot control the anxiety and austerity of these times. But we can strongly encourage commitments to promises made. And we can work together to strengthen the other crucial elements of development cooperation that go beyond financial aid.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We all know that aid alone will not eradicate poverty, save the lives of children and mothers or improve their health. These goals can be achieved only if aid delivery is supported by coherent aid policies and strong and accountable national institutions.

The report of the Secretary-General emphasizes that harmonization of aid and non-aid policies is a pre-requisite for success. In developed and developing countries alike, policies related to agriculture, trade, investment, migration, security and technology are so often at odds with aid policies.

Some good work has been done in this area by the OECD and other organizations. The European Union, for example, has worked on coherence procedures in 12 policy areas. A growing number of EU member states have introduced legislation aimed at better coherence.

Overall progress among OECD-DAC members, however, has been weak. The report describes a slow pace of change. Only a few DAC members have mechanisms for resolving policy conflicts or dedicated policy coherence units. More political engagement is needed in this arena. Political views need to change before policy coherence is given its due attention.

Policies also need to support progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. With just five years to the deadline for meeting the Goals, it is more important than ever for countries to strengthen and tighten policies that will advance them.

The report also outlines trends and progress made by countries in creating accountability mechanisms. These are so important for aid delivery to improve – in quantity, quality and in impact. For donors to pledge larger and larger commitments, they need clear and reliable information about aid operations and impact on the ground.

At the same time, programme countries need guidance and technical assistance from donors if they are to improve their accountability procedures. They cannot increase evaluation capacities overnight and without information on best practices and technological aids.

The international community also needs to set high standard for international accountability mechanisms. The report suggests that we assess progress annually, create a focal

point to share best practice lessons, and fully fund the most useful mechanisms. I hope that you will strongly consider these recommendations going forward.

One cannot underestimate the value that monitoring and evaluation can have in this field. We need more solid, credible information about aid delivery and its impact, for so many reasons. This data is like a compass that can show us where we are performing well, where we are not.

Distinguished participants,

The report of the Secretary General covers these issues and others – such as progress on the global partnership for development Goal, how to best allocate resources among countries and within countries, and how climate change financing is fitting into ODA frameworks. We will elaborate on some of these issues in a report on international development cooperation which we are planning to produce after the DCF.

In the next two days I also ask you to focus on an imminent milestone for the international development community. In September, world leaders will gather in New York to consider the second comprehensive review of the Millennium Development Goals. Since 2000, we have seen good progress and large, unexpected setbacks due to the recent global crises. Indeed, many development gains have completely unraveled.

At this critical time, therefore, your input and participation is so important. We are counting on concrete, actionable ideas from the DCF that can help recover lost ground. We can still accomplish what we set out to achieve. Please help us in every way possible to do just that.

Thank you and I wish you a successful forum.
