

Statement by H. E. Mr. Léo Mérorès
Permanent Representative of Haiti to the UN
and President of the Economic and Social Council
Development Cooperation Forum
High-level Symposium
Cairo
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Excellencies,
Madam Deputy Secretary-General,
Distinguished Representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to start by thanking the Government of Egypt for hosting this High-Level Symposium and for the warm and generous hospitality. The excellent arrangements made by the host country for this milestone second preparatory meeting for the Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) deserves our heartfelt appreciation and thanks. I also would like to thank the moderators, speakers and participants, who have come to Cairo to contribute to our discussions and thus underline and reinforce this Symposium's truly international and multilateral character.

As President of the Economic and Social Council, it is a great pleasure for me to see so many of you, whose daily work is development cooperation, here today. It augurs well for the first ever-biennial High-level DCF that will take place in New York, in July 2008. It is my hope that you will continue this engagement with ECOSOC, at least till July this year, when we hold the first DCF.

The creation of the DCF by world leaders in 2005 was in response to the momentous change that has been taking place in international development cooperation. The World Summit reaffirmed the fundamental role of the United Nations and of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in promoting development cooperation and improving its effectiveness, coherence and impact. We are working through symposia, such as this one, to implement the promises made by our political leaders.

Because of the way it was conceived, the DCF has a special value added as a locus for policy discussion on development cooperation. Firstly, it is designed to engage the range of different development cooperation actors: recipient and donor countries, actors in South-South cooperation, NGOs, foundations, the private sector, global funds and others. Secondly, as a “forum”, it is meant to hold informal and frank debates, without negotiated outcome. But the discussions and conclusions of the Forum need to be captured and inform the debates in other decision-making fora. As President of the Council, I will do my utmost to amplify the voice of the DCF.

There are great expectations that, based on such a participatory process and open dialogue, the DCF will generate new perspectives and approaches to development cooperation. The Forum's deliberations are expected to produce policy guidance and recommendations that would be broadly owned by the international community.

The first DCF will need to demonstrate that such vision really impacts on development cooperation. This will happen if the DCF influences the decisions to be taken at the Doha Follow-up Conference on Financing for Development in December 2008. It also requires that the DCF contribute to the Accra High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in September 2008.

This adds to the importance of your discussions today and tomorrow. Your meeting will support the policy debate of the DCF. It will help define its impact on Doha's outcome in the area of aid and South-South cooperation. It will also influence the outcomes of the Accra on aid quality.

In and by itself, the Development Cooperation Forum offers an unprecedented opportunity for stakeholders to promote mutual accountability of development partners for aid commitments and aid effectiveness. It is expected to provide a stepping-stone towards renewed global consensus on aid quality, with national ownership and leadership at its core.

Over the next few years, the DCF will need to address a range of critical issues that influence the coherence and effectiveness of development cooperation policies. It is meant to become a principal mechanism for global dialogue and policy review on key development cooperation issues that impact on the realization of the Internationally Agreed Development Goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The international community has underscored the important role of the UN Economic and Social Council within the United Nations in promoting greater coherence and development impact of development cooperation. I intend to make every effort to ensure the success of the first Development Cooperation Forum.

I wish you successful deliberations during this two-day Symposium. And look forward to seeing of you in New York during the first DCF.

I thank you.