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**Statement  
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UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS  
PREPARATORY MEETING  
2010 DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FORUM**

**New York, 22 April 2010**

Mr. President of the Council,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to open this meeting and brief you on the preparations for the second biennial Development Cooperation Forum in June. I thank you for your attendance and I hope that your dynamic discussions today push us toward success in June.

The Development Cooperation Forum is one of the new functions of a strengthened ECOSOC. It is mandated to enhance the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. It does so by reviewing trends in development cooperation and promoting more accountability and better policy coherence among development partners.

The first Forum was held in July 2008. Later that year, at the Doha Conference on Financing for Development, its role as the UN focal point for development cooperation was reiterated. The Forum's Advisory Group, composed of representatives from governments, civil society and the private sector, holds meetings and symposia that have guided us to our agenda today.

This year's Forum comes at a critical juncture. The financial, food and energy crises have threatened development progress. In many countries, especially those in the South, the impacts of the crises will be long-lasting. ODA flows are falling short of promises made. Meanwhile, they need to be realized more than ever – especially with competition for climate change financing.

Accountability, therefore, among development partners needs to be much stronger. These issues will be paramount in the June Forum. We meet today in an effort to ensure that the June discussions are straightforward, incisive and productive.

The Forum will take place on 29 and 30 June as part of ECOSOC's High-level Segment, along with the Annual Ministerial Review. It will bring together Ministers and high-level experts on development cooperation from governments, parliaments, local governments, civil society organizations and the private sector.

Distinguished delegates,

The Forum will meet against the backdrop of an increasingly complex development landscape due to the global crises. It will meet just two months ahead of the United Nations High-level plenary event on the MDGs in September 2010. For these reasons it needs to give a very clear sense of direction for development cooperation efforts.

During the one and a half day Forum, a series of policy dialogues will focus on the most pressing challenges and trends in development cooperation. Some of these have emerged from the Forum's preparatory events and its Advisory Group. I will share with you the specific questions to be addressed. Please consider them carefully in your discussions today. These most pressing questions are:

- (1) How can policies and development cooperation objectives be synchronized so as to maximize MDG impact?
- (2) How can partnerships among development actors become more equal and accountable?
- (3) How can aid management systems at national and international levels be strengthened?
- (4) How can the international community better engage NGOs, civil society and other actors in joint efforts?
- (5) What will it take to increase aid and allocate it fairly across competing needs? How can donors balance MDG commitments with other competing needs?
- (6) How can development cooperation be improved to achieve the MDGs by 2015?

Ladies and gentlemen,

As you debate these questions today and at the Forum, please keep in mind that accountability is paramount. Already-existing donor commitments must be realized. Donor and aid recipient relationships must be two-way. At the moment, they are lopsided. In many countries we are not able to hold donors to their current commitments. Recipient countries complain of conditionalities. A recent survey of countries with a UN presence conducted by DESA and UNDP showed that there is a dire need for increased trust and accountability between donors and recipients.

Also, please keep policy coherence at the forefront of your discussions. Various initiatives have been undertaken to improve donor policies, but much work remains. Little attention has been given to the impact that poor policy coherence has on developing countries. Special focus will be given to these topics at a High-level Symposium hosted by DESA and the Government of Finland on 3 and 4 June. Please keep the symposium in mind as you deliberate as well.

I know that there may be disagreements among you on these questions and issues. I urge you to listen to and hear each other. Try to understand the circumstances behind the other person's position. Please work together. With the MDG Summit upon us soon, your collaboration is imperative.

Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

As I look to the future, I see the DCF as a regular meeting place for high-level development cooperation experts of all types. It will guide the international community in policy coherence and it will keep stakeholders accountable. It will continue to promote better ways of increasing aid quantity and quality.

Through these measures it will realize the global partnership for development – Goal 8 of the Millennium Development Goals.

For our part, the Secretariat has been supporting the Forum in many ways. We helped countries host symposia that present analytical work of the highest standards. We have conducted studies on accountability and others on South-South cooperation. Those studies, together with the outcome of the Vienna symposium in November 2009, will feed into the report of the Secretary-General to the Forum. It will be available in late June.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to extend my gratitude to all the friends and innumerable partners of the Development Cooperation Forum who have brought it a long way since its inception. It is heartening to see such good progress made.

I would like to close with a reminder that high-level participation in the Forum is essential. High-level participants maximize the power of our debates. I invite all of you to support this effort by alerting your ministers of planning, finance and development cooperation to participate in the 2010 High-level Segment of ECOSOC. It is also important to reach out to civil society, the private sector and parliamentarians. Thank you in advance for your outreach efforts.

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