

Speaking points for H.E. Ms. Ritva Koukku-Ronde, Under-Secretary of State, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

Delivered by H.E. Mr. Jarmo Viinanen, Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations, 22nd April 2010, New York

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Preparing for the 2010 Development Cooperation Forum (DCF); the Helsinki High-level Symposium: Focus and Objectives

- Let me first of express my gratitude for this opportunity to tell you about the High level Symposium to be arranged in Helsinki on the 3-4 June in preparation of the 2010 Development Cooperation Forum. We are very excited about this event and our original intention was to bring our Under-Secretary of State for Development Policy and Cooperation to New York to brief you on the preparations, Due to the unfortunate disturbances in the international air traffic she was, however, not able to make it here in time. She therefore asked me to convey her warmest greetings and regrets to you all and to present her comments to you in her place.
- The second DCF will take place during the week of 28 June 2010 in New York against the back drop of multiple crises and global challenges, which threaten the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs. The progress already made towards achieving the MDGs has been and continues to be hampered due to, in particular, the global economic crisis and the impacts of climate change. The DCF should give a clear political message to the UN High-level plenary event on the MDGs to be held in September 2010 that we need to step up our common efforts.
- In a relatively short time the DCF has developed into a key forum for high level dialogue on international development cooperation. Several factors account for this initial success. Let me mention a few: the high quality and politically balanced nature of the analytical work produced by the Forum; support from various stakeholder groups; and last but not least, strong commitment to the DCF of developing and developed countries as well as non-governmental actors.
- We have to build on the success of the previous DCF-meeting and make the DCF even more relevant in international development cooperation. In doing so we have

to ensure that we make proper use of all available international platforms and processes in a coherent, mutually supportive way. In our preparation for the DCF we should not forget the holistic nature of the international development agenda. There are several other meetings and processes on the UN agenda to which the DCF has an important contribution to offer. For example ECOSOC's Annual Ministerial Review, the UN High-level plenary event on the MDGs, the Rio +20 meeting in 2012 and the on going international negotiations on climate change.

- The themes selected for DCF 2010 are highly relevant in the context of the global crises and the evolving international aid architecture. The DCF provides a unique broad-based forum for discussing new ideas and trends in development cooperation. It can be used for instance to discuss and seek broader understanding for ideas and initiatives brought forward by other institutions such as the G20 and OECD's Development Assistance Committee.
- We all recognise the imperative of delivering on aid quantity and quality commitments. More attention should, however, be given to the need to pursue more coherent development cooperation. Development cooperation should be supported by coherent policies in other sectors, and greater emphasis should be placed on the impact aid can have in leveraging other kinds of development financing. Poverty cannot be reduced without assuring better coherence between all policies affecting development.
- The changes that have taken place in the global aid architecture, including the growing number of providers of development cooperation, make it more difficult to ensure consistency between the activities of various actors. These changes also challenge the already weak capacity of many programme countries to ensure coherent and effective management of the incoming aid flows.
- The Helsinki High-level Symposium, will address these interrelated challenges with the overall objective of promoting practicable solutions for a more coherent development cooperation framework, notably from the perspective of recipient development cooperation partner countries and building on their experiences.
- Against the backdrop of multiple crises, this Symposium aims to foster discussions among a wide range of stakeholders on issues that can significantly improve the impact of development cooperation on the internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs.
- Furthermore, the Symposium will promote Policy Coherence for Development to ensure synergies between development objectives and other policies. The symposium will discuss the multifaceted challenges towards building coherence in the range of policies affecting development cooperation. Stakeholders will share

experiences on how different policies can have a significant impact, either positive or negative, on development and the MDGs.

- The Symposium will also highlight the significant role of foundations, civil society and the private sector in development cooperation; discuss the positive impact that national mutual accountability mechanisms can have on effective aid delivery and development partnerships; and promote a more concerted effort in achieving gender-related development goals.
- Country case studies are being presented to illustrate successes and challenges. The idea is to support a free flowing debate among aid practitioners and other senior policymakers and representatives of civil society and the private sector. The sessions of the two-day meeting will focus on the following specific themes:
 - (i) Policy coherence for development and the role of aid as a catalyst for other development financing;
 - (ii) Quality and impact of gender-specific aid;
 - (iii) The role of private actors including foundations in a coherent development cooperation framework; and
 - (iv) Examples in holding development cooperation actors to account at country level.
- The purpose of the symposium will be to move from theory and principles to practice ; that is, to produce concrete outputs and tangible results relevant for efforts at the country level in each of these areas. It is very important that the DCF adopt an evidence based approach and builds on country case studies and good practices.
- The symposium in Helsinki will also provide an important opportunity for last minute in depth discussions on all of the key issues relevant for the preparation of a successful DCF. It should build on previous work done during the preparatory process.
- Finally let me say that we are very happy to be able to contribute to the preparatory process of the DCF by organizing the High-level symposium in Helsinki. Finland has always been a strong supporter of the UN system. Among its important strengths are its global membership, its comprehensive working agenda and its strong expertise in matters relating to development cooperation. As you have heard we have set an ambitious agenda for the Helsinki Symposium. Our hope and strong belief is that the meeting will be successful.

- With your help we are confident that we are going to make concrete progress on all the important and challenging questions that we face at the DCF in 2010 and beyond.

Thank you!