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**Opening Remarks by  
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**GLOBAL PREPARATORY MEETING  
2010 DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION FORUM**

**New York, 22 April 2010**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to welcome all of you to this Preparatory Meeting for the 2010 Development Cooperation Forum.

This morning, I chaired another meeting in preparation for this year's Annual Ministerial Review of the Economic and Social Council on gender equality and women's empowerment. The focus was on the status of rural women and their contributions to poverty reduction, food security and economic and social development. The situation of women makes a particularly compelling case for reducing *structural* inequality in opportunities for human development. This must be one of our first concerns when we talk about accelerating progress on the MDGs.

The role of aid in ensuring progress towards the MDGs is significant, especially in times of crisis or against the backdrop of the on-going timid recovery. Many countries and social groups depend on external financial and technical aid to eradicate poverty and accelerate development progress.

At the Doha Follow-up Conference on Financing for Development in December 2008, key actors in international development cooperation reiterated that they would honour their commitments on aid quantity and quality.

We all know that many of these commitments are far from being reached, most notably on the side of the providers of development cooperation. Although the OECD/DAC figures for

2009 are better than we feared, it remains to be seen whether donor countries will accelerate progress towards meeting their commitments in 2010.

The Doha Declaration re-emphasized the importance of the DCF as the focal point within the United Nations system for holistic consideration of issues of international development cooperation, with participation by all relevant stakeholders.

The DCF has a unique opportunity to act as a global, independent platform to hold all answerable for the commitments made. But we can not afford to limit ourselves to talking in general terms. Debating is not enough.

The ultimate test will be whether the DCF's work leads to real change in development cooperation policies and behaviours at country level. The DCF should impact indirectly on the lives of ordinary people, the rural women we were talking about this morning and the many other groups suffering from the devastating consequences of the economic crisis. Whether it does so, is still far from certain.

But I put my trust in the DCF as a forum that brings together experts and practitioners from the country level. A forum where governments, executive and non-executive branches, local and district governments, philanthropic organizations and civil society organizations as well as the private sector come together to discuss their development cooperation work. Their discussions should reverberate to the country level.

As one example, a study on mutual accountability conducted for the DCF in some 40 countries has spurred consultations among development cooperation partners. In some countries, it was the first time that all partners, including government and civil society, came together to discuss how programme countries can best hold donors to account on their commitments and vice-versa.

Expectations are high to make the DCF a forum that promotes aid and other sources of development financing and improves their use so as to target the most vulnerable groups and to strengthen country-led development. All of us are responsible to our citizens for delivering on these expectations.

I look forward to today's discussion, and the presentation of our panellists.

I will stop here and give the floor to Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Sha Zukang who will brief you on the preparations of the DCF.

Thank you.