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CLOSING STATEMENT
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***“Coherent Development Cooperation:
Maximizing Impact in a Changing Environment”***

Madam Chair,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to congratulate all of you on the conclusion of two days of lively discussions and debates.

The rigorous analysis of issues and the frank exchanges among participants have shown that these preparatory symposia are vital for building consensus on how the DCF should carry out its work.

Allow me to highlight some key messages that stood out at this Symposium:

First, policy coherence must be promoted at different levels: within donor countries, between donor countries, between donor and recipient countries as well as within developing countries. Coherence should also be strengthened within the global governance architecture.

Non-aid policies have critical implications for the realization of the MDGs. Countries can improve policy coherence by analyzing their trade, investment, debt relief and migration policies to ensure that they do not undermine aid policies. This is especially important in cases of fragile states and those reeling from natural disasters.

Policy coherence is a lot about political will. But institutions and legal frameworks matter, at both national and international levels. There is a need to collect more evidence, notably from developing countries, and to develop indicators on the impact of incoherencies. The DCF could undertake such tasks.

Second, policies should account for the growing importance of the non governmental actors in the aid arena. Foundations and civil society organizations are many and diverse. They provide critical development cooperation and nurture change in a range of areas. In the current fragmented aid environment, the principle of national ownership and leadership is more relevant than ever.

In order to achieve the MDGs, it is also important to recognize the role of local governments in such areas as provision of infrastructure and services as well as in development cooperation.

Better coordination among the various development cooperation actors will reduce duplication of effort and unpredictable and unsustainable funding. The DCF has a role in supporting the building of partnerships.

Third, we need to stress to all stakeholders the importance of accountability mechanisms. There has been very little progress in ensuring that donors are accountable to recipients on development cooperation commitments. Many systems exist to ensure mutual accountability. It is time to have a frank debate on why they still impact so little on behaviours. There are technical issues. There are problems of lack of capacity, for governments, parliaments and civil society organizations. But the importance of political will cannot be underestimated. The DCF has a role to discuss what has worked in the area of mutual accountability. It is also a platform where countries may be held accountable for progress in meeting their development cooperation commitments, notably those on mutual accountability.

Fourth, too little has been done to ensure that women and men are benefiting equally from aid. This is disappointing because the commitments are there, and the solutions are known. Enacting new laws, policies and strategies is important. Concrete steps also need to be taken to keep girls in school, give women access to productive assets and leadership, improve reproductive health, use special temporary measures, protect vulnerable groups. There is a dire need to build statistical capacities and formulate the necessary indicators to track progress in gender equality and in reaching the related MDGs. The importance of mobilizing adequate resources for gender equality and of building an enabling environment for development cannot be overemphasized.

The DCF needs to push for progress in all these areas. It needs to build consensus on the issues we have discussed and to keep them under review.

We have learned a lot during the past few days. Your national and international experiences and studies are vital resources.

I look forward to the Forum later this month when we will further solidify our ideas on pragmatic solutions to improve development cooperation among governments, NGOs and civil society. While saying that I must emphasize the role of parliamentarians.

Turning our ideas into concrete actions is imperative.

I look forward to a successful DCF.

Thank you.
