

UNITED NATIONS



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**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS
BY
MR. SHA ZUKANG
UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE 2012 UN CONFERENCE
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (RIO+20)**

**DCF Australia High Level Symposium
“Shaping a Sustainable Future – Partners in Development Cooperation”
OPENING SESSION**

Brisbane, Australia, 14 May 2012

“Gearing development cooperation towards sustainable development”

**Minister Carr,
Amb. Koterec,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

[INTRODUCTION]

It is a great pleasure to join you here in Brisbane.

On behalf of the United Nations, let me extend our deep appreciation to our host, the Government of Australia.

It is very refreshing, and indeed, energizing to be here on this beautiful land, renowned for its natural heritage.

Australia is an internationally-recognized leader in sustainable development.

You have taken pioneering initiatives on institution building for sustainable development, including at local and state levels... on sustainable development strategies... and on public participation.

As a continental nation surrounded by three oceans, Australia has also won admiration for its commitment and leadership on marine protection.

At the global level, your support for sustainable development in small island developing states, least developed countries and Africa, has been recognized by the international community.

In hosting this high-level Symposium focusing on international cooperation in sustainable development, Australia has once again demonstrated its leadership and commitment to global partnerships.

Excellencies,

The Symposium is taking place at a timely moment.

We are just coming out of two weeks of intense negotiations in New York on the draft outcome document for the UN Conference on Sustainable Development – Rio+20.

The next round of informal informals is scheduled in two weeks.

With Rio+20 fast approaching, the theme of today's Symposium "*Shaping a Sustainable Future – Partners in Development Cooperation*" could hardly be more topical.

[WHY A NEW MODEL IS NEEDED]

Since the 1992 Earth Summit, the world has witnessed strong economic growth and significant progress towards a number of the Millennium Development Goals. Yet, poverty, hunger, and disease burden remain staggering in many countries.

Our world is still one of growing inequality, and our natural environment is deteriorating.

With 9 billion people expected on earth by 2050, our population is swelling.

This means that, as early as 2030, the world will need at least 50 per cent more food, 45 per cent more energy, and 30 per cent more water.

To meet these inter-linked challenges, we must recognize that sustainable development is the only true option.

[ROLE OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION]

If ongoing preparations for Rio+20 have resulted in any insights, a basic one is that development cooperation will play a key role in expediting implementation in sustainable development.

I see four underlying imperatives for this key role.

First, the moral imperative.

With many developing countries facing growing challenges in hunger, poverty, public health and access to basic social services, development cooperation must increase.

Under many circumstances, official development assistance saves lives, creates hope and provides opportunities.

As UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has repeatedly emphasized, aid commitments must be kept, even in times of fiscal austerity.

We must communicate this to citizens in developed countries.

Understandably, they want to see results. So let's make sure that we have results to show them, through lives saved, jobs created and livelihoods improved.

Second, the imperative of change.

In a world confronted with increasingly inter-linked challenges on the social, economic and environmental fronts, development cooperation must change. It needs to be designed and delivered differently.

Aid allocations should reflect a balanced concern for the three pillars of sustainable development. And they should address both immediate humanitarian needs and long-term enabling requirements.

If rooted in sustainable development, development cooperation will empower recipients, enable women entrepreneurs, and inspire our youth to dare to dream of a better future – a future they want.

Third, the imperative of partnerships.

Development cooperation must be broadened to engage multi-stakeholders. In other words, it needs to be leveraged.

Precious aid monies can be used to help recipient countries mobilize other sources of development finance... be it domestic resources, private sector, philanthropy or foreign investment.

These combined resources must then be geared towards the realization of development goals.

Similarly, development cooperation must rally a broader range of actors.

The 1992 Rio Conference rallied the nine stakeholder groups, called Major Groups - that include business, farmers, the scientific communities, NGOs, trade unions, local authorities, women, youth and children, and indigenous people - in the quest for sustainable development.

Rio+20 must reaffirm these alliances and build new ones.

The fourth imperative is means of implementation.

Development cooperation is more than aid.

It includes collaborative efforts aimed at enabling countries to access markets. It includes measures designed to promote transfer, as well as affordable access, to clean technology.

These dimensions are even more important when we speak of *sustainable* development.

Indeed, as many of you know, much of the deliberation on a green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication - and on the framework of action in priority areas - revolves around means of implementation.

As developing countries accelerate transitions to a green economy, the costs will multiply. As a consequence, their need for development assistance, market access, technology transfer and capacity-building, will likewise increase.

Enhancing development cooperation to strengthen means of implementation in developing countries will go a long way in advancing sustainable development across the world.

For lasting impact, development cooperation must also be conducted within a framework of mutual accountability.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

[CONCLUSION]

Rio+20 is our chance to put the world on a more sustainable path... one that has inclusive green growth, social equity and the long-term health of our planet firmly at the centre.

Our debates here will help to better understand what it means to direct development cooperation towards sustainable development – and also what it should not mean.

I expect this discussion to contribute to the negotiations on the Rio outcome document, including in the negotiations on means of implementation.

However, reaching agreement on a roadmap is only the first step. Promises must be kept, and commitments fulfilled.

The Development Cooperation Forum in July will give directions on how development cooperation should support the outcomes of Rio+20.

And this symposium is helping pave the way.

I am truly looking forward to our deliberations during these two days. The Development Cooperation is known for its frank and open debate. Let us continue this tradition.

Thank you
